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NABUNO

Children of the Forest

*or
The Story of Indian Love*

By

EVERSON R. YOUNG

Author of "The Story of the Northland," "The Apostle of the Northland," "The Northland," etc.

Illustrated

By

J. E. LAUGHLIN



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Figure 100

Children of the Forest

A Story of Indian Love

By ^{EGERTON}

EGERTON R. YOUNG

Author of "On the Indian Trail," "The Apostle of the North," "My Dogs in the Northland," etc.

Illustrated

By

J. E. LAUGHLIN

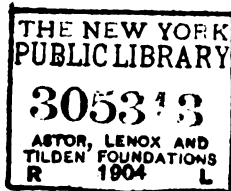


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Children of the Forest

I

NABUNO

Nabuno and her bird friends—Her father's mysterious sickness—Jisookeo, the conjurer—Nabuno aroused.

THE idyllic picture before us is now only a vision from the vanished past, a glimpse into the "forest primeval," a dream of times gone by, ere the irresistible march of the "paleface" crushed down the prairie flower, and obliterated the forest trail. The beautiful Indian wigwams, and at their doors the dark eyed maidens, in picturesque apparel of the fringed and ornamented deer-skins watching for the coming of their fathers from the chase, or of their lovers in their light canoes, are nowhere now to be found on all the great American Continent.

Of a vanished race I write, while many voices chide at the long delay, for with the rapid flight of the years, the mantle of oblivion has already fallen over much that ought to

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have been preserved to profit and to entertain.

That Nabuno was really beautiful, would be questioned by some, but as regards her cleverness and industry, there was nothing heard but the highest praise. We catch our first glimpse of this bright young maiden as she stands at the door of her beautiful wigwam. Although but eighteen years of age, her strong features and well tanned complexion, tell us that she has begun life's battles and that they have not all been easily won victories. Yet, until her father had been stricken down with the mysterious illness which now afflicted him, life had been to her one joyous holiday. A child of the forest and allowed the freest liberty by her indulgent mother, she early acquired the habit of wandering away from the wigwam home into the forest retreats, where the wild birds build their nests, and sing their sweetest lays.

Possessing in a remarkable degree the Indian gift of imitating the songs of the birds, Nabuno so won the confidence of her feathered friends that her appearance among them, and the singing of their songs and the thrilling of their lays, was a signal for a gathering that to many would have seemed as magical.

But was it only the magic of her voice and her gentle winning ways that had thus enabled her to make these loving friendships with

the many feathered songsters that loved to gather around her? True there were some so shy and timid that for months they hesitated ere they surrendered their suspicions, and allied themselves in confident companionship with this fair maid of the forest. That Nabuno frequently fed from her hands some of the feathered songsters that gathered around her, was not the only reason why they gave her their confidence and love, for there were some of them whose food was very different from that furnished by the limited resources of an Indian wigwam. Yet these birds, that cared not for the little fragments of fish or game, which were all that was in the power of Nabuno to bring, and that at rare intervals, were just as friendly and joyous as those who greedily ate from her open hands the dainty morsels.

Each species of birds has its own language. This Nabuno well knew, and it was to her a revelation as well as a joy, by patient study and mimicry, to find out and repeat those notes of love or alarm. Thus she was an expert in all their notes, from the blue jay's shrill discordant cries, or the robin's coquettish songs, to the mother bird's love notes to the little helpless brood in the cleverly hidden nest.

To the alarm signals of the birds, which

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have been noticed by so many students of the wild birds, Nabuno gave especial care. These she studied with patient insight until she was at length not only able to imitate, but also to form a fairly correct idea of the character of the enemies against which the birds were signalling and also of the direction from which the danger threatened. Little dreamed that happy Indian maiden that in the years to come, the knowledge which she was so pleasantly and patiently learning of the songs of the birds, would save her in more than one time of peril, and rescue her from the cunningly laid purposes of deadly foes.

The long sickness of her father and the breaking down of her mother's health, in her assiduous and constant care in waiting upon him, called Nabuno from the songs and companionship of the wild birds, into the toil and active responsibilities of life. The disease from which her father was suffering was a mysterious one, and this fact made the duties of those who waited upon him the more arduous and trying.

Nabuno's father, whose name was Shunio, was firmly convinced in his own mind that his sickness was the work of some evil magician, or unknown foe, who had cast his baneful spell over him.

Thus the bright Nabuno had to spend much

of her time in the darkened wigwam where lay her afflicted father, the prey of many terrors, that assailed him, as he brooded over the thought of evil men or spirits, who were, for some reasons unknown to him, invoking the aid of the Muche-Munedoo, the evil spirit, the source of all diseases, against him.

The presence of the old conjurer and medicine-man who came frequently to give his medicines of roots or herbs, and also to perform his horrid ceremonies, and exert his magic arts to endeavour to expel the evil spirits, was always a source of dread and terror to Nabuno. Pretending to believe as all these old conjurers professed, that the evil one was to be driven out more by his conjurings than his medicines, Jisookeo came each day, arrayed in a most repugnant way. Skins of snakes, entrails of bears, dried lizards, and frogs, with many other hideous things, hung from him in profusion, while his face was painted in a hideous fashion. When he began his weird dancings and contortions in unison with his unearthly yells and sounding rattles, one might easily believe that if his Satanic Majesty could be induced to beat a retreat by a sight most repellent, and sounds most discordant, here was all that was essential for a decided victory.

To Nabuno these things were distasteful, but

such was her love for her father, that with her strong nature she crushed down her annoyance and bravely remained, alert and watchful, at her father's side, during the trying ordeal. It was not long before her suspicions were aroused, and with a woman's quick intuition, she became convinced that the visits of the conjurer were doing her father more harm than good. Little, however, did she dream of the motives which were prompting him to do what was now exciting her suspicions.

Indians have a good knowledge of the medicinal properties of many roots and herbs. They know not only many of those that are beneficial and disease-curing, but they also are well acquainted with the properties of the most dangerous. From the poisonous toadstools, they extract a poison that can quickly kill the objects of their hate. From other plants they can manufacture medicines that while not suddenly taking away life, will keep the poor victims as helpless invalids for years. And what is more remarkable, they know the plants that are the antidotes for most of the slow poisons that have made many a strong hunter as helpless as a child.

Nabuno noticed that while Jisookeoo at each visit went through with his horrid ceremonies, he was always very particular about administering his medicines. She was also quick to

observe that her father was always worse after he had taken one of these decoctions, and indeed had sometimes hardly recovered from the stupor it brought upon him, ere the next visit of the conjurer was made.

What this medicine was, Nabuno was resolved to find out, for she had now shrewdly come to believe, that the conjurer was, for some reason she had not yet fathomed, retarding her father's recovery, instead of trying to bring it about. That her surmises or suspicions were correct, came to her in a way that very much startled her. Returning to the wigwam one day in which, at the commands of the conjurer, she had left her father alone with him, she heard her name mentioned by Jisookeo in a way that chilled her very heart, and rivetted her to the spot.

In that hour there came to her that swift transition, that abrupt revelation, that others in some sharp crisis in their young lives, have suddenly had to face. To Nabuno it was as vivid and as real as an actual transmigration, as she stood there compelled against her will by some subtle power to listen.

"Is it possible," she said to herself, "that I am more than a mere child, and that that old man has dared to ask my father to give me to him to be his wife!"

As she listened to the insulting words of the

conjurer, becoming more and more threatening, and contrasted them with her sick father's expostulations, as he pleaded the youth and inexperience of Nabuno, there was a sudden kindling of a fire and a passion in the young girl's soul, that so thrilled her that she could hardly restrain herself from rushing into the wigwam and attacking the old wretch, with the first weapon upon which she could lay her hands. But in those brief moments, while there raged this first storm that had ever ruffled her quiet life, there was also the arousing of those cautious instincts of the Indian nature, and that power of self-control which is possessed by these children of the forest, in such a remarkable degree. So Nabuno, whose love for her bird friends up to that hour, had been marred only by her solicitude and anxiety for her sick father, was now suddenly changed into an alert, cautious detective, fully resolved to learn all of the foul purpose of this old conjurer, and of his intentions towards her father and herself.

Hardly daring to breathe, she continued to listen to his words as he strove to bear down all the opposition of her father. When, however, speedy health was among other things promised, Nabuno could hardly keep from crying out, for by that promise she was confirmed in her suspicions that the wicked old man was,

by means of his semi-poisonous medicines, the cause of her father's mysterious illness.

With this knowledge in her possession, and her natural repugnance to continue the part of an eavesdropper, even if her own destiny was being discussed, Nabuno noiselessly withdrew to a short distance into the forest, and there in the sweet companionship of some of the birds that fluttered around her, lighting on her arms and shoulders, she tried to quiet her excitement and think out some plan by which she could rescue her father from the dreadful schemes of this wicked man, whom she well knew would not for a moment hesitate to kill outright, rather than to be thwarted in his designs.

“Nabuno!”

The cry which fell faintly upon her ears was one of anguish and of weakness, and it came from the wigwam of her father.

With a sudden bound she was off, and as she threw back the deerskin that served as a door to the lodge, she saw the conjurer, with a look in his face that was more like that of a fiend than a human being, making the most desperate efforts to pour down the throat of her sick father, a dose of some medicine. Seizing a heavy wooden club, she struck Jisookeo a blow which spilled all of his medicine and sent him senseless to the ground.

Ere he recovered consciousness, Nabuno's quick eye detected his sacred medicine-bag, and being resolved to discover the character of the medicine he had been giving her father, she quickly emptied it of its contents, which she hid under a fur robe on the ground. Then speedily filling up the medicine-bag with moss, she replaced it in the spot where she had found it.

When the conjurer regained his senses, his first thought was of his prized medicine-bag, the contents of which he would have no one know. Seeing it where he had left it, and apparently undisturbed, he quickly secured it and crowded it into its customary place under his belt. Then his wrath blazed out and with many threats he vented his ire upon the young maiden, who had dared to strike him.

Almost any other man than the Indian, in his reckless madness, under such conditions, would have rushed upon the girl and taken summary vengeance. But Jisookeoo was not accustomed to take his revenge that way. And indeed he was deterred also by a look in the eyes of this fearless girl, who, still holding the club in her hands, was alert to notice his every movement.

Shunio had now about recovered from the effects of his struggle, and this, joined to the fact that he had not swallowed any of the

stupefying medicine, enabled him to sit upon his robes, and with a strength that surprised even Nabuno, he ordered Jisookeoo out of his wigwam. This was about as unexpected as had been the blow of Nabuno.

For long years his despotic power had caused Jisookeoo to be feared by the people. He was accustomed not only to see them treat him with the greatest deference, but even to tremble at his appearance. Now suddenly to be thus struck by a girl, and then ordered out of the wigwam by her father, he felt to be the greatest insult that had ever been offered him.

Furious, he quickly gathered up the vessels in which on the fire in the centre of the wigwam, he had steeped his medicines, his sacred drum also and his rattles, and then angrily strode out of the tent.

Nabuno listened to his angry threats with indifference.

"Be careful what you do, for I have found you out," she said to him as he left the tent.

Stung to the quick, with his suspicions aroused, his cowardly nature made him quail before this young girl, who seemed to read his very life, which it had been his ambition to keep in deepest mystery. He drew his great blanket around him, and hurriedly retreated to his wigwam.

II

JISOOKEEO THE CONJURER

Jisookeeo's sulking—Nabuno's wisdom—The sacred medicine-bag—Shunio's startling discovery—Power of superstition—Isquasis and her sad lot.

JISOOKEEO, like the rest of his mysterious craft, had the greatest horror that any of his secret practices or doings as a medicine-man, should be discovered. Not only did he try to keep the qualities of his medicines, be they harmless or poisonous, from being known, but he also endeavoured to make his life such a mystery, that no one would have any intimation of what were his thoughts or purposes. But now, after all his efforts to mask his life, there suddenly had come to him words, and these from the lips of a mere girl, that seemed to indicate that the mystery of his career and actions had become known.

Like all such characters Jisookeeo at heart was a coward, and a superstitious one at that, and so more terrible to him than the blow which felled him to the ground, were the words of Nabuno which still rang with mysterious terror in his ears :

“Be careful what you do, for I have found you out.”

Pondering over these words, he moodily shut himself up in his dark wigwam, which was pitched where the dense balsams and hemlocks so over-shadowed it, that hardly a ray of sunshine ever pierced through the gloom. The song-birds shunned a spot so dark and repellent. Only a melancholy pair of owls, at times, were there heard to hoot out their mournful cry, fit music for such a place.

As soon as Nabuno was certain of his departure from her father's wigwam, she resolved that before he discovered the raid upon his sacred medicine-bag, and returned in fury to regain possession of its contents, she would find out for her father and herself all that she could about his medicines, especially those he had been giving to the sick man.

Going outside of the lodge Nabuno uttered a few notes of the blue jay, which was the signal call arranged between her and her younger sister, Geeta, who with her mother, and the rest of the family, had been obliged by the conjurer to remove to another wigwam, some hundreds of yards distant. To this bird call there was a quick response, and great was the surprise of Geeta when informed that all that was at present required of her, was to watch well the trail that led from the wigwam

of the conjurer, and to give instant alarm if the old fellow were seen approaching. The strange determined look on Nabuno's face was quite sufficient to repress all questionings on the part of Geeta, and so she very promptly began her watch on a spot from which she could command the whole of the trail.

Having taken this precautionary measure Nabuno uncovered the medicines and handed them to her father. He, as many of the Indians apart from the conjurers, knew much about roots and herbs, and their medicinal properties. Jisookeoo's totem image, which was a beaver, Nabuno quickly threw into the fire. The medicines, which the father carefully examined, were principally poisonous. There was one kind, however, that especially attracted his attention. It was an herb, the decoctions of which while not causing immediate death, so debilitated the system, and weakened the mind, that the victim of it became a mere tool in the hands of him who administered it.

When Shunio found this out, he asked Nabuno to find, if possible, some of the medicine which Jisookeoo had that day prepared for him. This she had not much trouble in doing, as her decisive ending of his efforts to force the draught down the sick man's

throat, had so demoralized him, that he had not as usual burnt up the herbs when steeped, and they were found to be of the kind just described.

This fact confirmed Nabuno's suspicions, which she had had for some time, and which now for the first time opened the eyes of her father to see the vile schemes of the old conjurer.

Now they could understand why it was that Jisookeoo had insisted that the sick man should be obliged to live in a wigwam away from his family and have, as his only attendant, this young, inexperienced girl. No relative or friend had been allowed to visit him, for dire were his threatenings of sudden disaster, if any one should presume to interfere with his treatment, which he had declared would take some months to effect a cure.

With this discovery of villainy, there arose such a revulsion of feeling towards the man who had so long cast the witchery of his superstitious spell over them, that that conjurer's power was broken forever. But that this terrible man would do them all the harm he could they were also convinced, and so they resolved to act as promptly as possible.

Carefully hiding the bad medicines, for it was not her purpose to destroy them yet, Nabuno went out to the place where her

sister was on guard. Informing her that the matter was urgent, she sent her to several wigwams not far distant, where dwelt some uncles and other male relatives, with earnest requests that they should at once come to the wigwam of Shunio. They were prompt in responding, for the sick man was one of the most honoured men in the tribe.

When they saw Shunio, they were shocked at his weak and emaciated appearance, and could not but feel indignant at the lies of the conjurer, who, while refusing to allow them to visit him, had declared that he was rapidly regaining his health.

Shunio was too weak to say much and so he requested Nabuno to tell the startling story.

In their impassive way, they lit their pipes and smoked and listened, while Nabuno told of all that had occurred. The medicines were then brought out from the hiding-place for investigation. The sight of them, with the knowledge of what some of them meant, caused great excitement and curiosity.

We can hardly blame them when we remember the carefulness with which a conjurer guards his sacred medicine-bag, and the superstitious fear that he tries to throw around it. So here with the contents exposed, of one long guarded by a conjurer of such a reputation, it is not surprising that there was among them a



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certain tremour and awe, as they gazed upon what had been its contents, which Nabuno without any fear or hesitancy turned over before them.

These, with Shunio's explanations of the medicines that had been given him, and of what was evidently the design of the crafty conjurer, aroused the ire and indignation of the relatives present. Nabuno's courage in striking him down was commended in their quiet way, although the bravest of them feared that her life would now be beset with dangers, as long as that desperate man lived.

Jisookeoo's audacity in asking for such a young maiden as Nabuno to be his wife, while already he had two or three old ones, as well as one young one, whom he had brought back that very summer from his meeting with the conjurers, very much angered them. They were also indignant at the heartless method by which he was attempting to secure her. Instead, as was the custom of the tribe, of being willing to purchase her from her father, he was here discovered to be trying to so weaken Shunio by bad medicine, that he would be compelled, as the price for restored health, to surrender his child. Then, looking at it from the selfish standpoint of their own peace and security, they wanted no marriage alliance with this dangerous man, whom they only

feared and dreaded. And so there was a unanimous objection to his even having their relative Nabuno, whom they respected in their quiet way, to be his wife, or rather, slave, which undoubtedly would be her lot.

Doubtless if Jisookeoo had suddenly made his appearance while Nabuno was speaking, or displaying the contents of the medicine-bag, the people while there all together, might have mustered up courage sufficient to have attacked him, but as the excitement died down, the old fears of most of them reasserted themselves, and one after another arose and quietly flitted away to his own lodge, hoping in his cowardly superstitious heart, that the old conjurer would never hear that they knew anything of his doings, or had seen the contents of his medicine-bag.

There were some, however, who were not thus terrorized by their fears, and who did not stand in such dread of the old conjurer. These resolved to stand by the sick man and his brave daughter, and see if possible that no harm came to them.

The first thing they did after burning all the bad medicines, was to assist in the reuniting of the family, so cruelly separated by the command of Jisookeoo, and the recital of as much of what had occurred as was thought best to be known by all.

Shunio, while thankful to have his loved ones around him again, made but slow progress towards recovery. So many and severe had been the doses of the injurious medicine which he had taken ere his revolt, that his whole system seemed poisoned by their effects. Added to this, were the fears under which he lived, as regarded the threats of the conjurer.

Fortunately for them Jisookeeo had been so humiliated by his defeat that he remained for a long time in the seclusion of his wigwam, brooding over his fall. He did not even take the trouble to consult his sacred medicine-bag as these men generally do in their perplexities, hoping for some responsive impression as to the course to be pursued.

As the days went by, Nabuno who could not bear the suspense, resolved to at least find out what old Jisookeeo was doing.

Girl though she was, the events of the last few days had transformed her very being. So now she decided that the best thing for her to do was to carry the war into the wigwam of the old conjurer. This she resolved to do from the fact that she had already become acquainted with the young wife of the conjurer, to whom reference has been made. Nabuno had met her out in the forest where talking and singing with the wild birds, Isquasis, for such was her name, toiled hard with a heavy

axe to cut the wood required in the conjurer's wigwam.

Nabuno had become much interested in her, so had arranged several interviews, and had at length heard enough of her pathetic story, to excite her curiosity to hear more. So jealously guarded, however, was she by the old wives of Jisookeo, who treated her as a slave, that it was only for a few minutes at a time that she and Nabuno could be together. However she had told Nabuno that she had had a brave young lover, who was a successful hunter, in the villages from which she had been forced. She told how that this old Jisookeo had come in between them, and had so terrorized her father, that he had compelled him to give her for nothing to him in spite of all her tears and entreaties, while her young lover was far away in his hunting-grounds. With impassioned words, and flashing eyes, she talked of the manly beauty of her lover, and contrasted him with this wretched old sorcerer, who had thrown some magic spell over her father, so that he had submitted to thus give away his child.

As Nabuno at first heard these passionate words, and the bitter protests against such wickedness, before her own deep sorrow had come to her, her simple childish nature was terrified by them. So much so, that for some

weeks she had purposely seen but little of Isquasis. But now that there had come such a sudden awakening in her own experience to a new life, she resolved to go and see Isquasis, in the hopes that by the sharing of each other's sorrows, there might be devised some way by which there would come at least a mitigation, if not an end of their troubles.

This decision having been reached by Nabuno, she resolved as quickly as possible to carry it out. Fearful of some disaster happening to her father, she had only for very short intervals left his side, although some relatives had promised to stand by her and see that no harm came to either of them.

Encouraged by the presence of several of them in the wigwam, and assured of their devotion, Nabuno resolved to have a quiet interview with Isquasis and find out all she could regarding the old conjurer, whose very silence was now a mystery to her.

The meeting was arranged by Geeta, who was a brave, cautious girl, although she was only about twelve years old. She had heard of her father's sad treatment, and was naturally indignant. She readily entered into Nabuno's spirit and helped to carry out her plans.

Geeta found Isquasis returning on the forest trail, with a load of rabbits which she had snared. She introduced herself as the sister

of Nabuno, and told her that Nabuno desired to meet her alone to talk over a very important matter. Isquasis was glad to arrange such a meeting.

When Isquasis reached the wigwam, although her bundle of rabbits was a very large one, she received no words of commendation, but was met with blows and execrations for her long absence. Then she was ordered off to cut wood for the wigwam fire.

Curious as to the purpose of the coming visit of Nabuno, Isquasis vigorously plied the axe, on the uncut wood near at hand, and soon had a sufficient pile for present needs which she carried inside of the wigwam. Then again taking up the axe she hurried off to a secluded spot where she was in the habit of going for wood, and where it had been arranged with Geeta that Nabuno should meet her.

To talk bitterly or even disparagingly of a man to a woman, who is his only wife, generally has the tendency to arouse all of her anger and passion in his defense, even if at times, her own quarrels with him are many and fierce. But in the case of the polygamist, this rule does not hold good, and especially in a case like this before us, where the aggrieved wife was only taken into the family to be the slave and drudge of the older wives, who

tyrannized over her most unmercifully, while also there are the sad memories of crushed hopes, and of a far-away lover, who, it may be, has not yet become aware of his loss, or of her sorrow.

Nabuno, who had by a circuitous route reached the same place, after kissing Isquasis, wasted but few words before she began to tell the story of what had already occurred, and of her fears as to the future.

Isquasis tried to keep up her chopping at the log in order to divert suspicions, if inquisitive eyes should be on her, but she found it hard work, as her own heart, although crushed with its own sorrow, was warm and sympathetic to the grief of others.

When Nabuno told of what she had so accidentally overheard, of Jisookeoo's threatening her father with increased sickness, and even death, unless he gave her to him as a wife, Isquasis was furious, and perhaps it was well that she had the axe in her hands, and could, by vigorous blows upon the log she was cutting, relieve herself of some of the bitter indignation that filled her soul.

The story of the blow that knocked the old fellow senseless, and then the securing of the contents of the medicine-bag, which he had guarded with such jealous care, intensely interested and pleased her, and did much to

quiet the fiery indignation that had at first taken possession of her. Then, as rapidly as possible, they talked over the whole matter, and especially the great question: What could be done to avert his attacks, or render him powerless for evil?

Isquasis stated that her impression was that Jisookeoo had not yet discovered the loss of the contents of his medicine-bag, and probably would not until he paid one of his periodical visits to his magic tent, to begin his incantations. But at present he was sitting, sullen and savage, in the darkest place in his lodge and was waited upon by his trembling old wives, who, intimidated by him, vented their own feelings, by doing all they could to make life miserable for Isquasis.

That something ought to be done, and done quickly, was the decided opinions of both of these young Indian women.

Isquasis, who was of a more fiery and passionate nature than Nabuno, maddened by a sense of her own wrongs, over which she was ever brooding, suggested the using of some of the poisons taken from the medicine-bag.

Nabuno at once recoiled from this suggestion, and was thankful that she was able to banish it from the mind of Isquasis, by informing her that after the examination of the medicines, they had all been destroyed.

This scheme thus thwarted, they tried to think of other plans, but the longer they talked, the more the helplessness of their own positions was realized and they were obliged to part with nothing really accomplished, except that in their common sufferings and anxieties their hearts had become knit together in a bond of closest friendship.

III

ISQUASIS' STORY

Bird call signals—Jisookeoo's struggle with one of his old wives—The sacred medicine-bag in the fire—The owl call—The two girls in conference—The trysting-place—Isquasis and Shanwandais—Her rescue from the wolves.

ERE they separated, these two Indian girls, thus strongly knit together, not only by their individual sorrows but by the subtle law of living sympathy which can so quickly weave its magic spell over kindred spirits, pledged themselves to do all they could to aid and comfort each other. Some familiar bird calls, as signals, and replies, were agreed upon between them, and it was also arranged that if either received any hint or information that would be of any service to the other, they were to meet as soon after as possible. Nabuno was especially anxious that she should be informed if the old conjurer made any move that seemed like preparation for inflicting any injury upon her father or herself.

She was thankful to find on her return to the wigwam, that nothing unusual had occurred, and that indeed she had hardly been missed.

Isquasis loaded down with wood, on her return met with nothing more than the usual words of abuse, which in view of what she had learned from Nabuno, she received with a better grace than usual, for although nothing practical had come out of the interview, still there had entered into her heart some encouragement and hope.

When the drudgery of the evening's work was over, and she was seated in her place, sewing on a moccasin, she was ordered by Jisookeoo, to dry and prepare for him some kinnekenick, the Indian weed used by many of them as a substitute for tobacco.

While Isquasis was busily preparing what the old man needed for his evening smoke, she made the discovery that the supply was about exhausted. To save herself from trouble, she mentioned the fact to Jisookeoo as she handed him his pipe.

At this news, the fury of the old man broke loose and turning to the old wife whose duty it had been, ere the snow had covered the ground, to secure a sufficient quantity of the weed for the whole winter's use, he demanded of her the reason why she had not gathered an abundant supply. To be without tobacco or kinnekenick, was worse than to be without food, was Jisookeoo's idea of things. The old woman only gave him a sullen reply. This so

enraged him, that he sprang at her and endeavoured to throw her into the fire.

Old though she was, she was so inured by hard toil that there was strength enough in her to enable her to make a desperate resistance. In the struggle between them, she managed to seize his prized medicine-bag and dragging it from his belt, she threw it into the flames and at the same time, in her frenzy, she shouted out at him some of his wild incantations. Seeing his medicine-bag imperilled he quickly let go of the struggling old woman and endeavoured to snatch it from the flames.

The old woman, now as full of rage and fight as himself, and rendered furious and reckless by his attack upon her, did all she could to thwart him in his efforts. The result was that the fire had time to eat its way into the bag, and the dry inflammable moss, with which Nabuno stuffed it, was soon in flames.

Isquasis, who had watched this conflict with indifference, was delighted when she saw the fire doing its work, and knew that the destruction of this medicine-bag would turn out to the advantage of Nabuno.

Jisookeo at length succeeded in shaking off the furious old woman and almost rushing into the fire, he seized his partially burned medicine-bag in his naked hands, and smothering the flames as best he could, he dashed out of the

wigwam and ran off to his magic tent. Here in solitude and darkness he hid himself from every one.

He was indeed a most unhappy being. A victim to his own superstitions, he was crushed in spirit, and as he lay there on the cold ground for hours, he could only in his ignorance, mourn that the Bad Medicine had triumphed over him and the *muché munito*, the evil spirit, was adding to his wretchedness. After all, these poor deluded wretches deserve our commiseration and pity. The victims themselves eventually of their own superstitions and delusions, when things go wrong with them, they suffer a mental torture that is indescribable. Thus *Jisookeo's* bad medicine, which he had prepared for others, had come back to him, with tenfold force and now he knows there is nothing for him to do but to suffer all of its direful effects.

Isquasis knew enough about Indian life to be aware that the old man would not leave his magic tent, the ghost or spirit lodge, perhaps for days. She was also certain that the old women would be busy for some time attending to the burns and bruises of the injured one. She saw that there was favourable opportunity for her to visit *Nabuno*, and let her know of the destruction of the medicine-bag, and of the humiliation of the old conjurer. So quickly gliding out of the wigwam, she flitted noise-

lessly into the shadows of some large trees that stood not far from the wigwam of Shunio. A few peculiar hootings as of an owl fell upon the alert ears of Nabuno, who well understood their meaning, and soon the two were together.

Isquasis very quickly related what had happened in the wigwam of Jisookeo, and while she rejoiced at the partial burning of the medicine-bag, she stated that she was fearful that, as with the morning light, the old man carefully examined what was left of it, he might yet find enough to arouse his suspicions, and excite him to revenge. Meanwhile, for a night anyway, they were safe and so Isquasis said that as she had promised to tell her the sad history of her life, and how it was that she had been torn away from her lover, she would tell it now.

Before Isquasis began to unburden her heart by the recital of her story, Nabuno, who knew many retreats in the vicinity of the village, led her companion some distance south to a secluded hilltop, sparsely covered with trees. To the east of them, the moon, which was nearly full, when it shone out between the passing clouds, not only lit up the waters of the beautiful lake, till at times the rippling waves gleamed like molten silver, but the distant fir-clad isles stood out clear and distinct, or were lost in the distant gloom. This tryst-

ing-place was a favourite retreat of Nabuno's and even now under the rays of the silvery moon, that cast such quaint shadows from rocks and trees, in contrast to the bright rays of ghostly light, it was fully as beautiful as when bathed in noonday splendour.

To this romantic spot Nabuno had often come. She had cleverly arranged for herself a rustic seat, and in it, while busy at her moccasin-making or bead-work, in the quaint companionship of the wild birds, she had spent many a happy hour. Here they were safe from intruders, and as they seated themselves in Nabuno's bower they remained for some time speechless, hand-in-hand, absorbed by the wondrous beauty of their surroundings. But one of them at least could not long remain in silence. Her heart was so full of sorrow, refusing to be comforted, that she feared it would break if she could not unburden it, even if it were only to this sweet girl friend, the first person who had spoken a kind word to her since she had been torn away from the land of her lover. So forgetting everything else except that she had in Nabuno a loving sympathetic listener, Isquasis in earnest, burning words, broken with many a womanly sob, poured out the story of her broken heart and shattered life.

“My father's name was *Meno-mitig*. Our

summer home was on the northern shores of the Lake of the Woods. Here we generally remained during the pleasant months, as the fishing was good, and there were many water-fowls which could be shot by our hunters.

“When the snow began to fall we generally went north where the deer were abundant and where the men of our wigwams could trap the various fur-bearing animals, that were sometimes very numerous, especially along the streams that ran north beyond the height of land to the Hudson Bay.

“For some years a spirit of unrest was among the people, and we wandered as far east as the great Keche Gume (Lake Superior).

“My mother early began to call me Isquasis (little woman), and the name has never yet been changed. She was very kind to all of us and early taught me how to make and mend moccasins, dress the skins of animals, weave fish-nets, and indeed do all that is required of the women of our people.

“My father, Meno-mitig, was very angry that all of his children were girls. Indeed so enraged was he that when my last baby sister was born, he would not speak a word to any of us for days.

“Still while he never had many words of kindness for us at any time, he did not treat us cruelly, by beating us, as some fathers do

their girls. He was pleased however to notice that our mother was careful to teach us everything that should be known by women. This was because he knew that he then could ask more for us from the men who came with their offerings to purchase us as wives.

“Shauwandais (the waving feather), was a young hunter of our tribe. The wigwam of his father was pitched near to the one in which dwelt our family. As we wandered to various hunting-grounds, the two families were very seldom far apart. The result was that as children, we grew up together.

“Shauwandais grew up to be tall and stalwart. He early became ambitious to excel as a hunter. So absorbed was he in this desire that he was called by the custom of our people, to go out into the forest and spend some days in fasting that his totem might be revealed to him. It came at length to him as an eagle.

“He was welcomed now as a man among men, and spent most of his time in the pursuit of game. The result was that often he was away for months, as he, with other venturesome hunters, plunged deeper and deeper into the great northern forests, where were to be secured the finest of the fur-bearing animals. Even when he returned we did not always see

much of him, as he rested in his father's lodge and made ready for some other trip.

"Still in our few meetings, while his words were not many, they were always kindly, and there was always that in the glance of his eye that was pleasant and restful. Perhaps I was foolish, but I felt in my heart that I was the one for whom he would yet ask my father. But I saw that he was too proud to seek me until he could do it with gifts so many, that father could not refuse him. Thus my heart went out to him and I worked hard under my mother's care to be worthy of his love.

"That I was not mistaken was soon revealed.

"One day I went out as usual to visit my rabbit and ptarmigan snares. They were that year some miles distant as the rabbits were few, and those who hunted them were many. I had been fairly successful and was returning with my game upon my back. Suddenly I was attacked by two fierce wolves. My little hand tomahawk which I had used in making my rabbit snares, was not much of a weapon against such fierce animals. However I was resolved to do the best I could, and so springing up to a large tree, I placed my back against it. Then woman like, I shouted out, as loudly as possible, and fought the wolves as well as I could. I had sense enough to fling from me my load of rabbits and ptarmi-

gan. These for a time diverted the attack from me, for the wolves were ravenously hungry, and speedily devoured them. It did not however take a couple of such fierce brutes long to devour a few rabbits, and so it was but a short time ere they seemed resolved to eat me also. I swung my tomahawk as well as I could, and either it, or my voice, seemed to deter them from at once seizing me.

“How long I was there in that dangerous position I do not know. It was likely not many minutes, although it seemed very long to me.

“Then there was a report of a gun, a rush. And while one wolf lay dead shot through the heart, there was a quick attack made by a stalwart Indian with his axe upon the other and he too soon lay as dead as his comrade.

“My rescuer was the brave Shawandais. I was very thankful for my escape, and of course I told him so, and I was doubly pleased that it was he who was my deliverer.

“As my rabbits were gone, he laughingly said: that he thought I had better carry home the skins of the two wolves instead, as they were in prime condition and very valuable.

“While he was busy in getting them ready for me, for he would not let me do the work, he told me of his love for me, and that he was hunting hard to obtain sufficient with which

to secure the good will and consent of my father for our marriage.

"This was indeed good news for me, for, as I have already told you, I had in my heart begun to feel that he was more to me than any other.

"So there we promised to be true to each other and to patiently wait."

But here the poor broken-hearted girl burst into a paroxysm of weeping, and when she could regain her voice could only wail:

"Alas, we are far separated from each other and know not if we shall ever meet again!"

Nabuno put her loving arms around her, and calmed by her tender, soothing words, Isquasis was at length able to proceed with her story.

IV

THE CONJURERS' COUNCIL

Meno-mitig, her selfish father—Happy meetings of the lovers—Shauwandais' departure—The gathering of the conjurers—Their mysterious doings—The people terrorized—Their hypnotic power—Isquasis surrendered to the conjurer—Her angry and fruitless resistance—The wolf cry.

“**T**HE story of my narrow escape from the wolves, and the bravery of Shauwandais were soon known throughout our village, and our friends in their quiet way talked of us as suitable for each other.

“My father, Meno-mitig, was grateful to Shauwandais for his rescuing me from the wolves. He accepted the wolfskins which I dressed and presented to him as a gift from both of us, but he gave no sign that he especially favoured him. But this was the way of our people.

“Without seeming to do it, my father saw that I did not have many interviews with my lover. But when we did succeed in meeting, and talked it over, we saw that my father, as I have said, having no sons, was resolved to get as much as he could for his daughters.

When Shauwandais became convinced of this he resolved, such was his love for me, to devote all of his energies to his work as a hunter, to secure all that any father had a right to expect for his daughter. So from that time we met even less frequently than before.

“It may seem strange to you, Nabuno, who so love the singing birds, and can imitate their calls so well, that Shauwandais and I made the wild weird cry of the wolf our signal call to each other. My lover would have it so, because, as he laughingly said, that he had to thank the wolves for giving him courage to open his mouth and declare his love to me.

“I can never forget our last meeting. He told me of his plans and hopes. He had already secured so much by his huntings that he was confident that the one long expedition he had planned, with one or two other clever young hunters, would bring them all the returns that would be needed. But that meant that they would be away the whole fall and winter, and would not return until the next spring, when they could build canoes and thus bring their heavy bales of furs in the open rivers.

“My heart beat wildly as he took me in his arms and kissed me, and I could have cried out against his running so many risks for me, but I was proud of his love, and of his courage,



"HE TOLD ME OF HIS PLANS"

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and so I crushed down my sorrow at parting, and returned his loving kiss and promised to be true.

“Then trouble came.

“The conjurers and medicine-men came from many places and held their secret councils, and celebrated their ghost dances in our village. They were a strange lot of fearful looking men. Even the men that were to be initiated into their mysteries were old men and we were told had been for long years preparing for the ceremonies that were held. They kept much to themselves, and for this none of us were sorry.

“While we young folks of the village were much afraid of them, some of us were curious to find out what they were doing. But we did not find out much, as they were very suspicious and watchful. I was told that they exchanged much bad medicine between themselves and taught the newly-made conjurers how some of them were prepared.

“They lived in the wigwams of our people, who were so much afraid of them that they dare not refuse them anything. To save them from getting angry and injuring any of us, we gave them the best of everything we had.

“This old wretch, Jisookeoo, came to the council in a large canoe. While his old wives, who paddled it, lived in a brush lodge, which

they made on the shore of the lake, the old conjurer himself walked into our wigwam and there remained. My father gave him the best place in the lodge and the best fur robes on which to sleep, and the best of our food.

“At first he was away a good deal at the secret councils of these men, for there were many of them. In a few days my father seemed to fall under some strange spell or power which Jisookeo had over him. He appeared to lose his power to think and act independently for himself. He acted at times like a person who walks and talks in his sleep.

“It became so bad at last that we all dreaded to have that old man look at us, as there was something about him that made us tremble when we knew that his eyes were on us. But we knew that they would soon leave us, and so we patiently did the best we could for them, so as not to incur their ill will.

“Little did I know what was coming. If I had, I should most certainly have fled from the village. It is dreadful to think about it, and to recall it. But I will tell you all.

“The morning Jisookeo was leaving, he coolly told my father that he wanted me as his young wife, and strange to say, although he offered my selfish father nothing, my father at once submitted to this demand.

"It was because of the strange spell which this old conjurer had thrown over him.

"When I heard my father's voice commanding me to get ready and go away to a strange country with this old bad man, I cried out to my friends to save me from such a life. But I was only an Indian girl, and my relatives, as well as my father, seemed powerless to act in my behalf.

"My lover, Shauwandais, was far away. I could not do much but I struggled and resisted until I was made as one dead, and then I was carried down and thrown into the canoe.

"When I came to myself there was a strange taste in my mouth. I learned afterwards that it was from some powerful medicine which the old man had forced down my throat when I was unconscious. So dazed was I by it, that I did not even know which way we were traveling. For days it seemed as though I had no mind or will of my own.

"After some days' journeying, by land as well as water, how many I have not the slightest idea, we reached this place.

"For a long time I must have been kept in a kind of stupor by the bad medicines which were secretly put in my food.

"For a while the old women, at the command of Jisookeo, carefully watched me for fear I would run away. From my coming,

they have been cruel to me and have made me do all the heavy work. At first I found this very trying, as I was so weak from the effects of the bad medicines. But lately I have been getting stronger, and as I have never yet tried to run away, I think that the old man has stopped putting his medicines in my food.

"Now that I am beginning to feel like myself again, there has come the resolve to break away from this horrid life I am living. And this resolve is increased because I have met you, my sweet Nabuno.

"I have seen and suffered much from the vile old man, but what you have told me of his wicked and even murderous designs upon you and your father, has so added to my horror and hatred of him, that I am going to escape from him, even if I have to kill him."

These last words inexpressibly shocked the gentle Nabuno, who had listened to the sad story with intensest interest.

"O do not say that," pleaded Nabuno. "Rather fly now while he is brooding over the loss of his medicines that he may not think of you for days. The Lake of the Woods is west, far west of this. I will give you a blanket and tomahawk, and snares with which you can hunt rabbits, and you can at least try. But do not talk of murder, Isquasis."

"You speak kindly, my sweet Nabuno, but

your words are only as the wind that, playing in the tree tops, falls pleasantly on our ears. Sweet music and nothing more. I could never find my way alone to that distant village where stands my father's wigwam around which my sisters play while my poor mother weeps inside. Fierce wolves are in the forests, and the panther lurks ready to spring upon his victims. What chance would there be for a lone woman to face these and the many other dangers that would have to be met."

For a time there was silence. This was suddenly broken by Isquasis, who, impulsively springing up, cried out passionately :

"Has it come to this, that I am a coward, and am afraid of the dangers that are along the trail that would lead me to my lover! Forgive me, sweet Nabuno, for having mentioned them. I would gladly face them all if I thought my loved Shauwandais was yonder waiting to welcome me, or even if my father would forgive me for returning, and would welcome me home again. But I dare not return to the home of my childhood, for my father once having ordered me away, and perhaps still under the influence of this sorcerer, would drive me from his presence.

"And then my lover! How well do I remember our last sweet meeting, and of his brave resolve for me. I have tried to follow

him, as the moons went by, and have seen him in my dreams, as in that lonely land, with his brave comrades, he hunted and toiled.

“Then with laden canoes they have come over various rivers and across heavy portages. O my heart! my life! my lover! what grief and anger has perhaps been yours already as you have heard that my poor father even for nothing, gave me away to be the fourth wife of this old conjurer!

“O my lover! even if it fills your heart with sorrow, I hope that some one has told you that your Isquasis did not tamely submit to be thus torn away from her village home where she was living in a dream of bliss, because she was awaiting your coming.

“If they tell you all, as I hope, yet fear they will, you will know my beloved, that I tried to be true to our vows!”

As Isquasis uttered these words with all the intensity of her passionate nature, conscious of her terrible wrongs, she seemed as there she stood or moved about, now in the shadow of the trees, and then more frequently bathed in the white light of the moon, more like a priestess of some old mythology, than a mere Indian girl.

Nabuno, forgetful of her own anxieties, was filled with the deepest solicitude, and springing up from where she had been seated, she

threw her arms around her friend and with gentle constraint drew her down and seated her at her side. Then with soothing words she tried to still the wild beatings of that broken heart and to hush the sobs that would not cease.

To quiet such a troubled, throbbing heart was no easy task, but gradually loving sympathy in a measure prevailed. The sobbing ceased and Isquasis under this loving treatment, and the exercise of her own strong will, at length regained some of her usual composure, but she still remained with her hand rested upon the shoulder of her friend.

Just then a fleecy cloud flitted across the moon, and Nabuno, anxious to divert the thoughts of Isquasis from her great sorrow, tried to draw her attention to its beauty and then to the striking changes of light and shadow on trees and forest, as well as on the distant lake and islands. But Isquasis heeded none of these things. She seemed as one lost in a reverie.

For some minutes they there remained in perfect silence, for Nabuno could say no more, and now it seemed to her as though the very stillness and solitude were more effectively doing the desired work than could any uttered words.

“Listen! what is that! I think it is his call!”

V

AN INDIAN ELOPEMENT

The moonlight race—The frightened deer—The lovers' glad reunion—The secret visit to the ghost lodge—Shauwandais, as a Windegoo—Nabuno's thoughtfulness—The flight of Shauwandais and Isquasis.

WITH a bound Isquasis had broken away from Nabuno, and now alert and eager, with every faculty strained to the highest pitch she stood out in the full moonlight, on the highest point of the opening just in front of the forest retreat. Behind her was the beautiful lake with its moonlit waves and rocky isles. Before her straining eyes was the great dark forest that stretched on and on westward for hundreds of miles.

Nabuno, who had been startled by her excited words, was now as much bewildered by her extraordinary conduct. But she was observant and resourceful and so was not long in joining her companion. Almost any other girl would have asked for the cause of the sudden outcry and the strange dramatic actions, but Nabuno felt that it was best for Isquasis that she should keep silent and let her

excited fancy gradually wear itself out, for even Nabuno now thought that her actions were only the result of her imagination, overwrought by the recital of the story of her grief and loss.

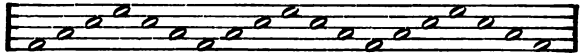
No word passed between them, and yet there was not absolute stillness, for there are but few places even in forest solitude, where every sound in nature is hushed. There were the strange voices of the night that sigh and sing muttered sounds, low and sweet, and indescribable. In addition to these faint blended notes, which fell with soothing cadences upon their ears, as rhythmically as the dying waves upon the shore, there were other sounds that were easily recognized.

Not far distant was the monotonous, oft-repeated cry of the whip-poor-will, while from some old hollow tree came at intervals the ghostly call of the owl. Birds, disturbed, uttered notes of surprise or complaint, and Nabuno felt certain that she heard some of her favourite robins piping out a few of their notes, even as they slept.

But Isquasis heard or heeded none of these voices of the night. Agitated and excited, her ears had heard another sound, and with every faculty attent, she was listening to hear it again, for now she felt that her very life and happiness depended upon her hearing it.

And she heard it, and so now did Nabuno. But it was far away and so low that even the old Indian hunters would have said that it was only the distant cry of a passing grey wolf.

The mournful cry of the great northern grey wolf is a monotonous rise and fall, three times repeated :



always dying away on the lowest notes.

Here, however, was a cry that while perfect in every other way, ended sharply on the very highest note at the third ascent of it.

With a shout of rapture Isquasis exclaimed as she seized Nabuno in her arms :

“ It is my beloved ! It is Shauwandais, the Waving Plume ! ”

As they were too near the village for Isquasis to call out the responsive answer so that it could be heard, and as the forest trail was now lit up by the moonlight, these two brave girls without any hesitancy dashed off in the direction from which the wolfish, but welcome sound had come.

“ Call out from here ! ” said Nabuno, when they had reached another eminence where the forest was much more open.

Springing on a fallen log, Isquasis quickly gave the answering call, and as with full lungs she sent out the far-reaching sound, a

terrified deer that had been sleeping near them, sprang up and dashed away, from what must have seemed to him the cry of his deadliest foe.

This sudden movement of the deer somewhat startled the girls, but as they saw what it was, they soon quieted down to listen for the responsive call. They did not have long to listen, for soon the cry was heard again, now not very far distant. To it Isquasis promptly replied, and then on they ran again through the woods.

If ever love gave wings to lovers' feet, they were certainly given now, and so it was not long ere Isquasis and Shauwandais, so cruelly separated, were in each other's arms.

Nabuno had wisely kept in the background when the lovers met, but the joyous, happy Isquasis soon brought her forward and told her story, and then rapidly rehearsed her own sorrows.

But happy as they now were, there was the future before them with its dangers and its risks. Shauwandais' first thought was, that when they had seen Nabuno near enough for her to safely reach her home, for Isquasis and himself to at once start back to his own country. But when he heard what they had to tell him of Jisookeoo, the old conjurer, who had not only so robbed him of Isquasis, but

had acted so towards Nabuno, and her father, he declared that no one would be safe while he lived, and that he ought to be killed.

From the suggestion of his death, Nabuno at once recoiled. But it was decided that Shauwandais should at least give him a beating, and if possible so frighten him, that he would not dare to carry out any of his dreadful threats.

When they reached the village it was long after midnight. The inmates of the different wigwams and lodges were all fast asleep. Watchful dogs were, however, prowling around, and while they would hardly notice Nabuno or even Isquasis, they would be quick to detect the presence of Shauwandais. But human cleverness is superior to brute sagacity when rightly used, and so without any noise the wigwam of old Jisookeoo was reached.

Perfect stillness indicated that the old women were asleep, and as there was no reason for disturbing them, the ghost lodge to which the old conjurer had fled was next cautiously approached. Noiselessly crawling close to it, Shauwandais discovered that the conjurer was awake and had kindled a little fire, before which he was muttering some of his incantations.

As Shauwandais listened, the voice of the old man at times grew louder as he poured out his

laments. The burden of his cry was for the loss of his sacred medicines, which had taken long years to gather, and the possession of which had given him his power over the people.

“Now they are gone,” he wailed, “and a child might now conquer me, so helpless am I without them.”

Thus he mourned and muttered, and while Shauwandais listened and studied him, he saw that without having to kill, or even personally injure the miserable man, he could accomplish all that was desired. The young man was well aware of the superstitious fears of many of the people, and their cowardice and terror when they think that *Bad Medicine* is in the ascendant and the *muche munito*, the evil spirit, is exerting his powers against them. And strangest of all is the fact that these conjurers or medicine-men, who were ever preying on the superstitious fears of the people, were themselves most easily terrified by adverse influences or anything partaking of the mysterious or supernatural.

Gliding cautiously back to where he had left the two girls, Shauwandais quickly told them of his discovery and of his plans. To carry them out he needed a couple of white blankets and a sash belt or two.

These Nabuno hastened to obtain in her

wigwam. While she was gone, Shauwandais who had seen, close at hand, a rotten log gleaming with the phosphorescent light, which is popularly called foxwood, gathered a quantity of it and carefully rubbed it over his hands, until they seemed as if they were all aflame.

With the blankets, which Nabuno had been fortunate enough to secure, and the girls' assistance, he now soon completed his preparations. A short stick was tied crossways to a much longer one which was so fastened to his back that it projected three or four feet above his head. This held one of the blankets which was so arranged that there was a hood-like affair at the top. Then the other was wrapped and tied around the man so that it made Shauwandais look like a being of gigantic proportions.

He then stalked boldly up to the little ghost lodge, which was but very lightly constructed. A strong sudden wrench easily tore out one side of it and then with a stately defiant stride, Shauwandais stepped in and reaching out his luminous hands, as though to grasp the miserable conjurer, he hissed out the words :

“Windegoo! Windegoo!”

With a cry of terror at the sound, and apparently the sight, of the dreaded Windegoo, the *bete-noir* of the superstitious Indian, the

cannibal man-eater, of all the most feared, Jisookeoo sprang through the opposite side of his frail lodge, and was seen no more by them for many a day.

Shauwandais as soon as he could untie his blankets, with the girls, carefully examined the wreck of the ghost lodge. Here they discovered what was left of the ill fated fire-bag. This with everything else that was to be observed, pertaining to the conjurer's miserable business, was consigned to the fire, which was made to burn with greater intensity, by the addition of the inflammable birch bark which had constituted the walls of the lodge.

As this spot, where now the ghost lodge was burning, was very secluded, they gathered around it and there was joy and gladness in their hearts.

Isquasis, while feeling safe as she sat there beside her stalwart lover, was yet eager to get away from a place that had been so dreadful to her. And yet she felt grieved to think that she must now leave this brave-hearted Nabuno, who had come as the sunshine into her dark life, and had so contributed to her deliverance.

Nabuno too had been thinking of these things, but while she possessed as we have seen, a heart capable of the warmest friendships, she also had a very practical side to her life, and so, now that the awful dread of

Jisookeoo which like a nightmare had so long hung over her, was gone, she turned her thoughts to the wants and need of Shauwandais' and Isquasis, whom she knew, for their own safety, must be far away west on the trail, ere the sun should rise. So making some excuse, she flitted away to her father's wigwam and soon returned with a quantity of food and other necessaries for the journey.

Such travellers carry but little with them, and these two were no exception. A hasty meal was eaten. Two bundles were then carefully packed, and then the lovers were ready to begin the long return journey to Shauwandais' lodge.

The two girls wept some moments in each other's arms, and said their farewells over and over again. When Shauwandais had again thanked Nabuno for her loving, helpful sympathy, he quickly threw the two bundles over his own strong shoulders, and exultant in his regained Isquasis, he started off with her at such a brisk pace that ere the sun rose, they were many miles on the way to the abodes of his fathers.

VI

NABUNO GOES FOR MEDICINE

Shunio's continued illness—Nabuno hears of the healing medicine—Her brave resolve to find it—Her sudden disappearance—The forest trail—The bridgeless river—The fallen tree—Her crossing disputed—The great bear—The combat.

THE recovery of Nabuno's father was very slow. He was thankful that he had escaped out of the clutches of the conjurer, but he could not easily shake off the baneful effects of the powerful medicines that had been administered to him. With great devotion Nabuno watched over him and anticipated his every wish. She cooked the daintiest morsels of game that his friends sent in, and coaxed him out on pleasant days into the warmth and brightness of the health-giving sunshine.

Still as the weeks went by, and there was no very perceptible improvement, her keen intuition told her that there was something on his mind that was worrying him, and thus retarding his recovery. So thoroughly did this thought take possession of her, that one day she mustered up sufficient courage to ask him

about it. At first he appeared to resent her advances, and instead of giving her any information, became more reserved and despondent. Nabuno grieved over this and while more and more convinced of the correctness of her surmises, could do no more than watch over and wait upon him with untiring care.

One day however he gave her a clue, which in her anxiety for him she was quick to follow up. He had been in a kind of a reverie, one day, and talked as does a man in his sleep. As Nabuno sat beside him she heard him mention, more than once, the name of some rare plant, for which he seemed to long. Several times subsequently she overheard him repeating the name of the same plant. So great was her love and solicitude for his recovery, that she resolved to tell him candidly what she overheard, even if she should again be repulsed.

This time he did not resent her questionings, but at first seemed startled when informed that he had revealed so much, that he imagined that he had been keeping to himself. Then he told Nabuno, as they were alone, that he was convinced that nothing but the possession and use of that rare medicinal herb, the name of which she had overheard him mentioning, would ever cure him. He explained to her that his father, while not one of the

medicine-men of the tribe, had a good knowledge of many of the medicinal plants of their country, especially of those that were the antidotes to the poisonous ones used by the conjurers. He especially had great faith in the plant that had been mentioned and he was confident that it would cure him, but unfortunately it was very rare and indeed only grew among the rugged hills in the height of land some days' journey to the northwest of their village.

This information was treasured up and pondered over by Nabuno until as days and weeks went by and there was still no improvement in the condition of the sick man, there came at length into her heart a high and firm resolve that she alone would go and obtain some of the medicinal plant which would bring back health to her father.

It indeed was a desperate undertaking. The long, pathless route was through dense forests, where roamed many wild animals. Yet the brave girl, who well knew that it was an undertaking beset with many perils, quailed not.

It did not take her long to make her few necessary preparations. Then installing her sister Geeta as nurse in her place, Nabuno, leaving the family under the impression that she was going to visit the wigwams of some distant relatives, early one morning plunged

into the dark forest and began her dangerous journey.

She had all the cleverness of her people in threading the pathless forests, and so was able to proceed unerringly, in the direction that she had heard her father casually mention. Her only weapons were a keen tomahawk and a knife. Her pack consisted of a blanket, a little food, and some twine with which she could make snares to catch rabbits or partridges as she needed them. In addition she carried, as all Indians do, a flint and steel with which to make a fire when desired.

Thus equipped, she pushed on for some hours until she was surprised at finding herself on the bank of a wild rapid river. Though dismayed she determined to cross, even if she had to attempt to swim its treacherous current. However, before resorting to this desperate expedient, she resolved to examine the banks of the river and see if any other plan for crossing could be found. At length, after about an hour's exploration, she was delighted to find what suited her admirably.

It was a spot where the river had been so contracted by the great, massive rocks, that it was obliged to rush and roar through a wild gorge not more than sixty feet across. Here a giant tree had been blown down by some great gale, in such a way that it formed a

natural bridge over the river, at about the centre of the gorge. All around her was the dark forest, and beneath this narrow bridge the angry river foamed and roared like some savage beast, but Nabuno flinched not from her high resolve. She only delayed a few seconds to firmly adjust and balance her pack; then sprang up on the log and began the perilous journey across that wild river.

Remembering the proverb of her people for such emergencies, which is, "Keep your eyes on the farther shore," she fearlessly but cautiously pushed on until she was about one third of the way across, when like a horrid apparition there rose up on the other shore, a large black bear that, deliberately climbing on the fallen tree, began to walk on it towards the startled girl.

Nabuno was so confident that her beautiful but strong deerskin moccasins would grip the rough bark of the tree, that she had not had a shadow of fear of falling. But what was she now to do? To go back was out of the question. Her quick wit told her that even if she could work herself backwards, her position on the land would be much worse than it was here on the log. All she had to depend on was her tomahawk, and she well knew that that would avail her but little, as the bear is such a skillful fencer that in all

probability he would speedily knock it out of her hand in a fight on the land.

Nabuno well knew that the bear would have her at a disadvantage on the land but here on the log, where he could only fight with the greatest care lest he overbalanced himself and fell into the raging river, she was quick enough to perceive that her keen tomahawk was a match for his teeth, which were all he dare use in such a place. She was also confident that he would not there attempt to try and seize her in the death hug, which is the black bear's favourite method of killing his foes.

So this brave girl, with the blood of warriors in her veins, resolved to face her foe and there hold her ground, even if her chances of victory were but slight. From the very fact of the precarious nature of the foothold on the log she knew that the bear would have to act with extreme caution.

Black bears are expert climbers and have but little difficulty in crossing streams on fallen trees. Their sharp claws serve them so well that they have no hesitancy in taking great risks in dangerous places. Although able to swim like dogs they prefer these crossings to the plunge into water, which is generally in these regions, icy cold. Thus it was in this case, and so, carefully and

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cautiously, he was here crossing this log, and perhaps, not for the first time.

Indian hunters declared that bears are much more alert and watchful against enemies coming in their rear, than they are to study the trail in front. In this instance this seemed to have been the case, as the bear was well out on the log before he saw the Indian maiden.

First he stared at Nabuno and then seemed to say :

“Is not the sight of me sufficient to cause you at once to hurry back out of my path ?” This speedy retreat not having been made, he became very angry, displayed his teeth and uttered his ominous growls. Still bravely facing him, there stood the Indian girl, unmoved by his fierce demeanour. Then he cautiously raised himself up on his hind legs, and gnashing his teeth, continued to utter his fierce growls.

Even all this, to his apparent surprise, caused no retreat on the part of Nabuno. So for a time they watched each other. Of course, this could not continue for very long, especially as bears are impatient, short-tempered animals, and this one soon dropped down on all fours, and again began to move forward on the log.

Nabuno had heard the hunters say that bears are very sensitive about the noses, and

so she resolved, if possible, to make her first attack upon this sensitive organ, if they came to a conflict.

Thus decided in her own mind, she coolly awaited the slow, cautious approach of the growling monster, that was every second coming nearer. When she thought he was close enough for her to make her attack, she gave one piercing shout. This so startled the bear that he threw up his head, as high as he could while walking on all fours. This was just what the clever girl wanted. While watching herself and keeping an even balance on the log, she quickly seized her opportunity, sprang forward and struck him such a blow on the nose with her tomahawk, that she cleft it to the bone. Then, as quickly, she stepped back a pace or two, and awaited the result. This bold attack was something the bear had little expected, and with a howl of rage and pain at the assault, he carefully backed up a couple of yards, and there, balancing himself upon his hind legs, he tried with tongue and fore-paws, to doctor his sadly wounded nose. If the situation had not still been one of danger, Nabuno could have laughed at the comical sight the bear there presented, pawing at his nose and licking away the blood, with his temper now worse than ever.

But furious as he was with pain as well as



"SHE STRUCK HIM WITH HER TOMAHAWK"

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rage, the sudden attack upon him had taught him caution, and he was in no hurry to again come to close quarters with this strange opponent, who perhaps might have something worse in store for him. How long they would have continued to face each other we cannot tell, if something else had not occurred, which quickly changed this awkward situation.

VII

MEMOTAS SLAYS A BEAR

The Ojibways and Sioux—The battle which gave Red River its name—Memotas—His early life and ambitions—How he met Nabuno—The trail of the bear—The woman's call of distress.

ACCORDING to the traditions of the Ojibways they were never aggressive, vindictive warriors. That they could fight when necessary, was well known. They were feared and respected by the surrounding tribes, with whom they were more frequently at peace than at war. Their hereditary foes, with whom they were more at war than any other tribe, were the Sioux of the Dakotas and Minnesota. They long treasured the traditions handed down of the most terrible battle ever fought between them and these Sioux, long ago on the banks and in the waters of the crooked, sluggish Red River.

The reports were that the battle raged for days, for there were assembled all the great warriors of both nations. The Sioux fought with all the courage of despair. They had been driven back from the east by the brave Ojibways who had been provoked to these

strong measures by the frequent depredation of Sioux scalping parties. Here at the great river they made their stand, and aided by all of the allies they could muster, fought the great battle. The fortunes of war so frequently changed during the battle that sometimes the conflict was on one side of the stream and then on the other. Great rafts were made of the trees which grew on the opposite shores and on these and in mid-river, the conflict was continued. So great was the slaughter that at times the waters were red as blood. It was from this sanguinary battle that the river derives its name of Red River. Educated Ojibways, however, declare that as the river was called in their language Omishkuimi sibi, Blood river, it ought to have been so translated into English.

In hearing the famous story tellers recite the accounts of such thrilling events in the war-like history of the past, the young Indian boys were reared. Thus early in life were implanted the ambitious desires to emulate these heroic deeds of old. In addition to these who talked of war and the famous warriors of the past, were those whose camp-fire stories of the great hunters, the men who had won renown in their conflicts with the great bears or fierce wolves.

Perhaps among the Ojibways, the young

men were more ambitious to excel as hunters than as warriors. It opened up before them a more constant field for the exercise of their skill and energies, and was more in harmony with their feelings.

The village in which Memotas lived was on the shores of the same picturesque Lake Neipigon, not very far from the one in which dwelt Nabuno. Like other boys he was early taught the use of the bow and arrow. As he grew older a flint-lock gun was purchased for him and he became noted as one of the best marksmen in the village. Living on the shores of a large lake he early became clever and proficient in the use of the birch canoe. Like the other Indian lads, in the brief summer months, he lived in his canoe. Memotas grew up to be a stalwart young hunter. He was not only industrious in his ways, but gentle in thought and manner, and cared but little for the wild old stories of the wars of the past.

Indians in those days never had any food stored away for future needs. The result was that the hunting and the fishing could never safely be relaxed. And now that Memotas had reached young manhood, the premature death of his father, entailed upon him, as the oldest of several brothers, the constant exercise of all his strength and cleverness.

The Indians naturally drifted to the shores

of the lakes and rivers for the fishing, as there was not much hunting in the forest during the summer months. The fur-bearing animals were not then worth the killing, and so they were not then sought after. Occasionally hunters, tired of the continuous fish diet, would take their guns and go after deer or bear. Fish however was the staple food while the lakes and rivers were free from ice. These northern waters swarmed with the delicious lake trout and white fish. Every stream was full of the dainty speckled trout, black bass, pike, pickerel, and many others.

It was a sight to fill a hunter's eyes and heart with pleasure to see the stalwart Memotas, while the east was illumined with the splendour of the dawn that preceded the rising of the sun, gliding so gracefully and rapidly along in his beautiful canoe over the rippling waters, now catching the variegated hues of the sky, the gorgeous clouds and illumined by the sun which was yet below the horizon. Possessing the poetic nature of so many of his people, he would at times amidst these wondrous morning visions of beauty, cease paddling until there was hardly a ripple on the glassy waters and there amid the fir-clad isles, he in his way, saw the Great Spirit in his works, and there was a feeling of gladness and peace in his heart.

But there are hungry ones with good appetites in the wigwam he has left on the shore and so our hero breaks from his pleasant reveries amidst his glorious surroundings, and under vigorous strokes, his light canoe like a thing of life, as it is of beauty, fairly flies through the waters, until he reaches his favourite fishing grounds where the nets have been previously set. Here he was often fortunate in finding them so filled with fish that on his home trips the gunwales of his canoe were very near the water.

Thus he lived and developed, and graduated in the great school of nature. He was one of her favourite scholars and so learned many of her choicest secrets. He was never lonesome when he could hear her voice. He could listen with delight to her softest zephyrs, and exult amidst the roars of the cyclone that swept through the mighty forest, or over the boundless plains.

Memotas was an ambitious young hunter. At the camp-fires and in the wigwams, his dark eyes would flash and at times fairly blaze with excitement, as he heard the old hunters recount some of their thrilling experiences of earlier days, as in fierce conflict they met with bears and other wild animals and fought them to the death in their forest or rocky retreats.

Although still in early manhood, he had al-



MEMOTAS

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ready won an honoured name among the young hunters. Some of the shrewd old men talked kindly of him at the council fires, and predicted great things of him.

Even dusky Indian maidens, in their sweet confidences with each other, began to be interested in him, and some even went so far as, with coy blushings to wonder which one of them he would soon be coming for to claim as his bride. The beautiful Nabuno listened but with little interest to these gay chatterings of the other maidens. No one for a moment thought of associating her name with that of Memotas, the stalwart young hunter. She thought more of the sweet songsters in the trees that waved above her white wigwam. Thus had the years of their young lives glided on, Memotas absorbed in his huntings, had given to the most beautiful of the bright-eyed Indian girls, but a passing glance. Nabuno with her love for the wild birds and her sick father and her friend Isquasis, had not thought of any other love than that which she ever had, in a marked degree for the other loved ones of her forest home. But suddenly these two bright young Indians were brought together.

How had it come about? It was love at first sight, and under circumstances that might easily have been a tragedy.

Memotas, a couple of days before Nabuno's exciting experience with the bear had taken his gun and gone off on a hunting excursion. He had succeeded fairly well, killing some small game, but was ambitious to secure something larger. On the second day of his expedition, he was excited and delighted by striking the fresh trail of a large bear. He had even found the great pile of leaves which the bear had gathered, and on which he had slept the previous night. He rapidly and cautiously followed up the trail of the animal. While thus engaged, he was startled by hearing a shout almost a scream, which his trained ears not only told him was the cry of a human being, but also was that of a woman. This greatly surprised him, as he well knew that there was not a human habitation within many miles. But amazed as he was, his cautiousness did not leave him, and with the greatest care he silently glided on in the direction from which his acute hearing told him the sound had proceeded. To his great satisfaction, the trail of the bear was frequently seen, and so he rejoiced that he was not going much out of his way while seeking for the solution of that human call. Suddenly he saw, but a short distance before him, an opening in the dense forest. As he looked out into that opening, there was revealed to him a sight that nearly

made his blood run cold, while at the same time it strangely thrilled and excited him. Before him was the wild rushing river, with a log bridge stretching across its most dangerous place. With his back towards him, sat a great black bear, and not more than twenty feet beyond, on that same log, with gleaming tomahawk in hand, stood the fairest and most beautiful Indian maiden his eyes had ever gazed upon. She was dressed in a most picturesque costume of beautifully wrought deerskin, that made her seem a veritable Diana. Her very pose, as she stood there, so well balanced on the log, alert and graceful, and yet so calm and collected, was a study for a painter's vision or a poet's dream.

So absorbed had he been in his efforts to excel as a hunter, and so thoroughly Indian had he been in his ideas of women, that the tender passion had not yet disturbed him, and Cupid's darts had found in him no lodgment. But now before him was a vision of loveliness that thrilled him, and for the first time in his life there were feelings in his heart, more than the mere resolves of the hunter.

He was wise enough to see that he must act cautiously, as well as quickly. He could rush out of his concealment and attack the bear, but if his bullet only wounded him, the infuriated brute might, in the presence of this sec-

ond assailant, madly rush at Nabuno and the results would be terrible to contemplate. So that would never do. Other plans came to Memotas, but with none of them was he satisfied. He resolved first of all, however, to make his presence known to the girl, without exciting the suspicions of the bear. So, remaining well concealed, and yet able to see both the bear and Nabuno, he trilled out loud and clear the beautiful notes of the American robin. From his hiding-place he saw the startled, searching looks of Nabuno and then, as the bear was still busy with his wounded nose, Memotas for an instant showed himself in an opening among the trees, and then, when certain that he had been seen, he again disappeared.

Nabuno was quick enough to perceive that it was best that the bear should not get any suspicion that another enemy was in his rear, and so she stirred just enough to keep the animal's attention to herself, while Memotas perfected his plans.

These were now quickly decided upon. Carefully reloading his gun, he cautiously glided to a spot behind a rock, not far from the riverside where he would be close to the bear on his retreat. Here he began to imitate the barking of a dog. He made the sounds appear as though they were those of a

dog at some distance in the woods. Bears are in mortal terror of dogs, especially of those that attack them in the rear. Next to his nose, the muscles of the hind legs of the bear are his most sensitive points, and for the defence of these he will make desperate efforts. He is cunning enough to strive to guard against being caught in any awkward position where he is unable to guard himself from attacks in the rear. It happened in this case just as Memotas anticipated. The startled bear, unable to turn around to defend himself if he were attacked on the log, resolved to beat a quick retreat ere those dogs could reach him, and fight them on the shore. Little dreaming of any enemy so near, he carefully backed off the log, but the instant he reached a point beyond danger of falling into the river, a deadly bullet did its work, and he fell, a limp mass upon the ground.

The moment Memotas fired, Nabuno fearlessly continued her journey, and was welcomed and congratulated by Memotas. Her beautiful eyes spoke even more than her grateful words as she thanked him for his timely arrival and the very skillful way in which he had accomplished her deliverance and secured for himself the bear. Soon they were on the best of terms. He was not only fascinated by her beauty, but charmed by the courage and

spirit she had shown in the trying ordeal through which she had just passed. Then, when she had satisfied his curiosity as to the reason why she was found so far away from her wigwam home, by telling him of her sick father's longing for this celebrated medicine, and that, as it seemed impossible to get it in any other way, she was making the long journey alone to the wild land where it grew, his admiration for her was intensified, and from that hour she was more than all the rest of the world to him.

VIII

HOSTILE INDIANS

Memotas and Nabuno—Their meal in the forest—Nabuno reveals to Memotas her mission—He pleads to be allowed to accompany her but is refused—Her journey resumed—Memotas' speedy return to his village—Visits the wigwam of Nabuno's father—Hears bad news—Hostiles roaming in the forest—His hurried departure on the trail of Nabuno—The shooting of a wolf—Nabuno still unreached.

NABUNO, had heard of the growing renown of Memotas and had seen him in company with other Indians. She was now not only filled with gratitude to him for her clever rescue but was also charmed by his courteous demeanour and lack of all boasting over his deeds. Thus it happened (and how could it be otherwise?) that these two children of the forest, unspoiled by the hypocrisies and sham of artificial life, fell in love with each other, and amidst these romantic surroundings.

As some hours had passed since either of them had eaten, a simple meal was soon prepared. Memotas' keen knife soon had some steaks from the bear, while Nabuno prepared

a fire on which, in addition to the steaks, she skillfully cooked some smaller game. A couple of cups made out of the bark of a birch tree, and filled with water from a natural spring near by, furnished them all the drink they needed. And thus amidst their laughter and merriment at their strange meeting on this romantic spot, they thoroughly enjoyed their first meal together.

Memotas pleaded to be allowed to accompany her on her journey after the medicinal plants, but this Nabuno would not allow. Alone she had started on this undertaking, and if possible, she was resolved unaided to accomplish it. She did, however, accept a keen knife from him, as an additional weapon of defence, if she should ever come in close quarters with a bear on the land. Then springing up as soon as the meal was ended, she threw her pack over her back, and almost before Memotas could understand her movements, she dashed away and disappeared in the dark, trackless forest.

Memotas inclined to follow her, but he was deterred by the knowledge that this action on his part would give great offence to the high-spirited, brave girl, who was so decidedly resolved to carry out alone her plans to secure the recovery of her sick father. So he speedily "cached" part of the bear's meat, and add-

ing the rest and the magnificent skin to his pack, he set out on his homeward journey, resolved as soon as possible to visit the wigwam and family of this beautiful girl, who had so suddenly come into his heart and life.

Many were the looks of approval with which he was greeted on his arrival at his wigwam home when the magnificent robe of the great bear was inspected. Indians are chary of their words, and so their looks are often the more expressive.

When Memotas could get away from his own wigwam without attracting special attention, he quickly made his way to the village where was the wigwam of the father of Nabuno. This was as has been stated only a few miles away, and yet the families were but little acquainted, as there still lingered some remnants of an old feud. However, Memotas, ignoring these things, boldly entered into the wigwam, and having brought with him some of the choicest of the game he had lately killed, he cordially laid it at the feet of the father of the beautiful maiden who was now so much in his thoughts. For just such game the sick man had been craving, and as it was very difficult to obtain at this season of the year, Memotas' gift was the more acceptable, and it at once secured him a hearty welcome. His fine appearance and pleasing demeanour

made a most favourable impression on all and so he lingered as long as Indian etiquette, under such circumstances, would allow. He was, lover-like, anxious to learn all he could, without exciting suspicion, about Nabuno, but had to retire with much less than that for which he longed. However he did find out why the sick man believed that that particular medicine would effect his cure, and he also discovered that there was not the slightest suspicion in the minds of any one, of the long and dangerous journey that Nabuno was even now pursuing, or the object for which she had dared to undertake it. From some of the younger members of the family he learned that they supposed she had gone to visit an uncle, who lived some miles away, and would return that evening, or, at the latest on the following day.

This latter information only made Memotas more restless and anxious. He, however, concealed his feelings, and bidding the family a kindly farewell, he returned to his own abode. All through the evening he, who was generally the brightest of the gathering, was silent and absent-minded. The fact that this noble girl, unknown to any of her loved ones, was hourly pushing on farther and farther through those pathless forests in that dangerous land, exposed to so many perils, at length produced such an

effect upon him that the keen, observant eyes of some around him detected his perturbation of spirit, and they anxiously inquired as to the cause. Cleverly he tried to throw them off, but it required all of his strength of will to do so, and even then he was only partially successful.

Early the next morning he was again at the wigwam of Nabuno, but still there was no word of her, and but little anxiety on her account. Towards evening he found some excuse for repeating his visit, and now he found them in a sad state of excitement and alarm.

It seemed that shortly after Memotas had returned from his morning call at the home of Nabuno, the uncle, at whose wigwam it had been supposed by the family that Nabuno had gone, arrived at the home of his sick brother. When he was questioned about her, he declared that she had not been to visit them for weeks, and that neither was she among any of the friends among whom he had called on the way. He then added this further information, which only increased their alarm, that he had come to warn them to be on their guard, as some hunters, who had just come in from the northwest country, had detected the trail of hostile Indians.

The imparting of this news, especially the latter part of it, to Memotas, filled him with

consternation for was it not in that very country that that brave girl, who was now more than his life to him, was pushing on, alone in her perilous journey? The thought of the dangers to which she was exposed, not only from the savage beasts, but yet more savage men, so stirred him that he hurried back to his home, and seizing his gun and some needed supplies, and merely stating that he was off on a long expedition, he plunged into the forest.

The shadows of the night were gathering when he started, but what cares a skilled Indian whether the sun or stars shine, when he is finding his way over a trail once travelled.

Armed not only with his native skill but with his great love for Nabuno, Memotas had no trouble in conquering all the difficulties of the way and so, some hours before daylight, he reached and crossed that log on which he had caught his first glimpse of the beautiful maiden on whose trail he was now resolved to follow until he found her.

As the most difficult part of his work was now before him, he had to curb his impetuous spirit and wait for the morning. Indians can do many wonderful things, but Memotas could not in the dark find the trail of such a light-footed maiden as Nabuno. So he did the next best thing possible and that was to cut from the "cached" bear a liberal supply of meat,

and after cooking some of it, he ate a hearty supper on the same spot where he and his beloved had had their meal shortly before. He then rolled himself up in his blanket and had a short but most refreshing sleep. So disciplined are these Indians, even in the matter of sleep, that to resolve is to succeed, and so our hero slept until the east was beginning to blush with pink and crimson beauty, when he sprang up with renewed vigour for the arduous task before him. A hurried meal of the remains of the supper was soon disposed of, and then began his difficult work. He well knew it would try all his keenest powers to pick up, and rapidly follow the trail of an Indian maiden, whose footsteps were as light as that of a young fawn. Yet he succeeded and made fairly good progress. Here his quick eye detected where her moccasined foot had snapped a twig. There she crushed a cluster of moss and here she had plucked a lovely northern lily, which farther on, when wilted she had thrown aside. Miles farther on, he discovered where with her knife she had cut a piece of bark from a birch-tree, and making a simple little cup out of it had quenched her thirst at a spring that bubbled out of the side of a rock. Using that birch cup as its owner had done, Memotas then lover-like, carefully stowed it away in his pack. Thus on he hurried, some-

times in uncertainty, and then, when signs were clear, with great rapidity. To his great annoyance now, hunter though he was, he discovered that he was being followed by a couple of gaunt grey wolves.

Of all carnivorous animals, except when goaded on by the pangs of hunger or in large numbers, the Indians consider wolves the most cowardly. The fact of this man so rapidly hurrying on and making not the slightest attempt at any aggressive act towards them seemed to encourage these two to follow on his trail.

Once or twice his trained ear heard the breaking of a twig and then an ominous growl. But he was not looking for wolves or bears. Other thoughts were in his mind and his feet were speeding him along on the trail of higher game.

He was, however, suddenly called for a time to halt and to act on the defensive. Feeling the effects of his rapid journey he stopped for a drink of water out of a crystal spring that bubbled up at the root of a tree. He used the little birch bark cup which the hands of his beloved had made. When returning it to his pack, he happened to look back along the trail he had come and there not now a hundred yards distant, he saw the two fierce wolves.

Memotas was able to at once understand the

situation and also what was necessary for a decisive victory.

Slipping his gun out of its leather covering he deliberately aimed at the foremost wolf and instantly killed it. With his tomahawk ready for a close conflict if necessary, he rapidly reloaded his gun. The surviving wolf however quickly disappeared in the thick forest, and Memotas, as though the matter were of but little importance, resumed his onward march.

Even if Memotas had not been so absorbed in his desire to overtake Nabuno, it would not have paid him much to have secured the skin of the wolf, as in the summer time they are practically worthless, and as is well known the flesh of the wolf is the rankest carrion. About the only animals that will eat the flesh of wolves are the wolves themselves. So in this case Memotas surmised that the wolf that had fled away, when the danger seemed passed, would return, and finding his comrade dead, would either go and gather other wolves to join him in the feast or else gorge himself on the dead animal. That the wolf was thus devoured was evident to Memotas, as some time later he found only a few bones scattered about where the bullet had done its deadly work.

Memotas' adventures with wild animals were

not however over yet, but while they gave him no concern for himself, he had much anxiety as to what might happen if similar attacks were made upon Nabuno, and how would she be able to successfully defend herself against them!

The next adventure of our hero was with a great black bear. This animal seemed to have had the same impression, as had the wolves in reference to this man, who was so rapidly hurrying through the forest. To his bearish mind, the fact that this man was thus running away meant that he was a great coward, and so he, as Indians say bears will do when people run away from them, quickly followed him.

Bears do not, like wolves, and some other animals, move noiselessly along. They are very careless and reckless in their movements, and as they plunge through underbush and over dead branches, they make a great deal of noise. The result was that within three hours, or so, after Memotas had shot the wolf, he found himself pursued by a big black bear who did not hesitate to let it be known, to judge by the noise he was making, that he was coming.

The ending of his career was quick and decisive. Memotas had been annoyed at the necessity which had obliged him to fire his gun in killing the wolf. The rumour that hostile Indians were prowling through the

forest made it necessary for him to travel as quietly as possible and he had previously used his gun with the consciousness that then there was no other alternative. Here, however, with this big bear following him it was different. All he did was to look ahead for a tree that would suit his purpose. One that was separate from the others and that stood out in the sunshine. Then against it Memotas placed his back and drawing his keen hunting-knife, he, without any fear, awaited the on-coming of the bear.

As the beast emerged from the forest gloom into this open place he seemed at first a little dazed by the sunshine. However he soon observed the object of his pursuit, and now aroused by the taunts of Memotas, who began talking to him, as all Indians do when giving battle to animals, he shambled over towards him and raising himself up on his hind legs, he closed up the few feet between himself and his victim, whom he now seemed to think was at his mercy. He then began trying to get his hand-like forepaws between the man and the tree in order to squeeze him to death.

Suddenly there was a flash of steel as a glittering keen-edged knife found its way between the ribs into the heart of the monster, and bruin fell over dead. With a laugh Memotas put up his knife and resumed his onward journey.

IX

A FORTUNATE ESCAPE

Nabuno's camping-places—Many dangers—Wolves on her trail—A war party—Memotas finds her second leafy bower—Ashes of her camp-fire still warm—He hurries on—Discovers that two hostile warriors are on her trail—Alarm cries of some birds ahead—Nabuno at bay, tomahawk in hand—Two fierce warriors gambling for her possession—Their quarrel and deadly combat—A glad reunion—The medicine secured—The return journey.

AT length Memotas reached the spot where when the sun had sunk in the western sky, Nabuno had prepared a cozy little resting-place, cunningly hid as a bird's nest, and almost as cozily arranged. At some distance away as a matter of precaution, she had made a little fire, and here had prepared her evening and then her morning meal. Nothing seemed to have disturbed her night's rest and so she had early resumed her difficult journey. Swiftly on her trail followed Memotas. He had still many miles before him for Nabuno was a good day's journey ahead. One more such maiden's bower must he find, and perhaps two, unless he can proceed with great rapidity. What

dangers were in the way he knew not, neither did he in his conscious strength, as far as he was personally concerned, care. But as farther and farther into the wild woods he proceeded, his fears and solicitude for her increased. And soon he had good reason, for, as he was hurrying on, he was horrified at finding where two great northern wolves, in roaming through the forest, had scented her footsteps and were following on her trail.

The tracks of the wolves were so plain that he was able to proceed with much greater rapidity. Soon after he reached the place where Nabuno had again rested and prepared herself another meal. Here the tracks of the wolves showed that they had been suspicious of traps and had acted very cautiously. He found, however, that they had again detected her trail and were following it up, although with greater caution than before. Thus the hours passed on, and the sun began to sink in the western sky, while Memotas, with all the energy of his splendid physique, continued his rapid course.

Suddenly he was once more arrested in his career, by a sight, that to him was even more dreaded than the tracks of the great wolves. There, clearly defined before him in the soft spongy ground, were the tracks of a big Indian. Quickly but carefully examining these tracks,

he discovered that some Indians had passed that way. The one following in the rear had, however, very carefully walked in the footsteps of his companion in front. It was evident from this that they were hostiles, and out on some warlike expedition.

Memotas' keen eye, with great satisfaction, soon discovered that they had not detected the trail of Nabuno, and a great relief was also experienced when he noticed that the wolves had turned off, sharp to the east, on the fresher trail of these Indians. While this was a source of great relief to Memotas, it once more left him the difficult task of following on the trail of his beloved Nabuno. But his love for her stimulated the keenness of his powers, and he succeeded so well, that ere the light had completely faded away he found where the brave girl had prepared her little bower and spent her second night. As the ashes of her camp-fire were still warm, Memotas had good hopes that early the next day he would overtake her. The fire was quickly rekindled with flint and steel, and after cooking a supper of some supplies from his pack, he extinguished it, in case of lurking hostile Indians, and rested until daybreak and then resumed his journey.

Here, and there, as he hastened on, were slight evidences of the light footsteps of the maiden. So recent appeared some of them,

that his keen eye began to scan the long stretches, that occasionally opened up in the forest glades before him, for a glimpse of the one for whom he was so eagerly seeking.

Once more there was a sudden chill of terror upon him, for he had again struck the trail of the two Indians, and it was evident that they had discovered the passing of Nabuno, and were cautiously following up her footsteps. No signs of the wolves were seen. They had doubtless been frightened away by the warriors. However, the absence of the wolves now made but little difference. Here was the terrible fact that Nabuno was being stealthily followed up by two hostile Indians.

Much oppressed by this fact Memotas hastened on the trail now again made so much easier to follow. Soon his keen ear detected the alarmed cries of some birds far ahead. These sounds made him doubly alert. Like other clever Indians he was able to read much from the unusual sounds of the wild birds of the near approach of enemies or intruders. Gliding along like a panther from tree to tree, Memotas came at length to an open glade in the forest where he would have an unobstructed view for some distance. While keeping himself from observation, he cautiously looked out from his hiding-place.

The sight that met his eyes was enough to

have driven an ordinary lover wild, and to have caused him to have recklessly dashed forward to his own destruction, and perhaps that of the object of his love. But while Memotas was the ardent lover, willing if need be, to perish in the attempt to save his sweetheart, he was also the cautious Indian, on the alert for success and rescue by clever stratagem.

There before him standing on a mere shelving of rock, about six or eight feet from the ground, was Nabuno. Behind her back towered great rocks, some scores of feet high. In her hand was her glittering tomahawk. Her brave, defiant attitude indicated that she was on the defensive; while before her, only a few yards away, were the two savage Indians. At first Memotas could not imagine what they were doing. They were not just then attacking the girl, and, indeed, they did not seem to be paying the slightest attention to her.

This conduct on their part, surprised Memotas very much, until at length he discovered that they were gambling in Indian fashion to decide which of them should have possession of Nabuno. That she would fight to the death they would not believe. Here they had her secure in their possession, for on this very rock, on which she had sprung when they had chased her, she had placed herself in a position that offered no escape. Thus they grimly

reasoned, and now as they were of different tribes, but only united in this warlike expedition, these two Indians, who had no love for each other, decided to trust to their gambling skill for the hapless Nabuno. It was while they were just beginning the game, that Memotas caught his first glimpse of them.

While they were so fully absorbed, Memotas was able to secure a position very much nearer to the contestants than that from which he had first seen them. He was now so close that he could easily have shot one of them, but he was deterred from doing so, by the fact that long ere he could reload his gun, the other Indian could fire upon him. So with every faculty alert, and watchful for the opening that would give him an opportunity to contend on equal terms against the two, he watched them with a strange fascination. As their game proceeded, and he saw the malignant scowls with which they regarded each other, he could not help shuddering at the thought of the beautiful and pure Nabuno falling in the clutches of such savages.

Suddenly the two Indians, with yells of defiance and rage, sprang to their feet, and raising their tomahawks at the same instant, recklessly dealt each other such murderous blows, that in a few moments they both lay dying on the ground. It was plainly a case

of cheating and being caught at it. Poor Nabuno while terrified at the fierce conflict, was also quick to perceive that out of it had come her deliverance.

Memotas, not wishing to startle her by a sudden appearance, seeing that all immediate danger was over, carolled out one of her favourite bird songs. Lovers' ears are quick. Nabuno by intuition seemed to know whose voice it was, and was immediately assured of it, when the next instant Memotas showed himself. She sprang from the rock in her delight at seeing him, and they were soon in each other's arms.

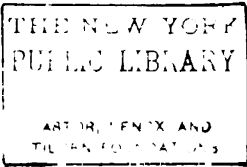
Nabuno now admitted that she had run a terrible risk in undertaking such a journey alone, and she was more than glad and thankful for this wonderful escape.

They examined the dead men and their fearful wounds, and then piling brush, stones and moss upon them, they gladly retired from a spot where such a conflict had taken place.

The question now was, what were they to do? As the region, where grew the medicinal plants, was not now many hours distant, it was decided that they should go on and secure a quantity of the desired herb. And as it was so evident that hostiles were prowling through the country, they took with them the guns and ammunition of the dead Indians. Carefully



RECKLESSLY DEALT EACH OTHER MURDEROUS BLOWS"



examining and reloading them, Memotas gave one to Nabuno and carried the other with his own.

So deeply stirred had Nabuno been by her chase, her escape and the murderous attack of the men upon each other, that she had no desire to eat and they pushed on and reached the long desired goal of her ambition and love. They found abundance of the herbs desired by the sick man and when a sufficient quantity had been gathered, they made a fire and their evening meal was cooked and eaten. As they rested in the cheery light of the fire, which they had lit in a sheltered spot, Nabuno told her lover of her adventures since she had sprung up and left him at the river, where he had shot the bear. She had known nothing about having, for a time, been followed by the wolves, but she knew that for some time, the wild Sioux Indians had been on her trail. Vainly had she tried to throw them off her track, but when at length she found that they were close at hand and she about exhausted, she had discovered that rocky retreat, where she could only be attacked from the front, and so, springing upon it, she had resolved to sell her life as dearly as possible. Vainly had they by threats and then by actual force tried to drag her down, but her well handled tomahawk had kept them at a distance. Not wishing to

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kill her, they did not use their guns. Then they began debating which should own her when they did capture her and so they proceeded to gamble for her, with the results which we have seen.

X

NABUNO RESCUES HER RESCUER

Memotas' precautions to guard from surprise—Nabuno's nest—The two logs at the camp-fire—Three hostile Sioux discovered—They rush the camp-fire—Nabuno's fortunate shot—Rescues Memotas from danger—Their homeward journey continued—The war party discovered—Instant flight their only course—The additional alarm—The deer with a feathered arrow in his flank.

MEMOTAS was now doubly proud of Nabuno and he resolved that he would be most vigilant in guarding her from every enemy. The presence of these two Indians, from a region so remote, made him think that there must be others not far away. So while Nabuno prepared for herself a cozy little resting-place, in a clump of spruce trees, not very remote, Memotas rolled some large dead logs on the fire, so that it would keep burning all night. While Indians generally put out the fire, unless troubled with wolves, there were times when they could with advantage avail themselves of its light against their foes. This latter course was the one pursued by Memotas. He rightly argued with himself that he could better defend Nabuno

under these circumstances, and the result showed the wisdom of his decision.

The priming of the guns was well examined so that if suddenly needed there would be no failure. Nabuno took one of them, while Memotas with the other two, retired to a little secluded place in the gloom, where he could both look after the fire and guard the spot where slept his loved one. He also took the further precaution of placing a couple of logs, which were about six feet in length, in such a position near the fire that they would look like sleeping hunters, and to make them more lifelike, he threw a deerskin wrapper, which he had in his pack, over them.

In the days of Indian warfare to which our story belongs, Indians when approaching a camp-fire were not in the habit of carelessly rushing into its light. It was their custom to carefully examine it from the dark woods around to discover the number and alertness of their foes.

It was fortunate for Memotas that he had taken all the precaution he did, for it was not many hours after he had retired to his hiding-place before he discovered that at least three well-armed Sioux Indians were stealthily examining the fire to find out the number and wakefulness of those resting there.

Memotas was almost carried off his guard,

as he saw them in their movements more than once crawl round near to the spot where Nabuno had her resting-place. They were, however, so intent on watching the fire, that they did not discover her. When they at length were able to see clearly the two apparently sleeping Indians, they quickly withdrew into the darkness of the woods, and Memotas knew it was to perfect their plans of attack, which would be by a sudden rush from that part of the forest nearest to the fire, and which was fortunately on the farther side from which the Indian maiden had prepared her resting-place.

Having discovered but the two sleeping at the camp-fire, the Indians soon made their preparations for attack. Memotas had not long to wait and he carefully placed his two guns before him, ready for use, and calmly watched for their appearance.

Like wild beasts they suddenly and rapidly glided out of the gloom into the light of the camp-fire. Uttering their blood-curdling yells, and war-whoops, they sprang upon their supposed sleeping foes and dealt them such terrific blows that their weapons were deeply embedded in the tough wood and they could hardly extricate them.

A mad trio of Indians they were! but suddenly, almost before their rage and chagrin could find words, they were changed to terror,

for out of the darkness there came the report and the bullet of the first gun, and quickly after those of another, and two of them fell mortally wounded upon the ground. With a war-whoop of defiance, the surviving Indian, seeing by the flash of the second gun that there was but one opponent, seized his gun and dashed towards Memotas in the hopes of being able to shoot him ere he could again load his weapon. Recklessly he came, but suddenly from behind Memotas there rang out the loud report of another gun, and the Sioux, with a yell of despair, fell dead with a bullet through his heart.

Nabuno's quick ear had caught the sound of the lurking enemies almost as soon as Memotas had discovered them, and securing her gun she had noiselessly glided away from her resting-place, and making a wide detour, had come up in the rear of her lover. She was but a little way behind Memotas when he fired his first two successful shots, and now as this third Indian came rushing on him with a yell of anticipated triumph, she speedily stopped his career, as we have seen.

Prouder than ever was Memotas of this beautiful girl, who showed the warrior blood that was in her veins, and the quickness and decision that are so essential in times of danger.



FROM BEHIND THERE RANG OUT THE REPORT OF ANOTHER GUN

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Hastily reloading their guns, for they knew not but that other enemies might be near and the reports of the firing might bring them speedily to the attack, they quickly but cautiously made their way to the camp-fire where lay the two Indians. In spite of the sight of the two slain enemies, Nabuno could not help being interested in the clever ruse of the two logs that Memotas had arranged so as to deceive even the wary Indians.

The night was too far advanced and the lovers were too much excited by the dangers and deliverances of the last few hours to think any more of sleep. So they rested and talked, and now, for the first time, Memotas told Nabuno of the arrival of her uncle at her father's wigwam, and of the anxiety of all at her mysterious disappearance, and of their utter ignorance of her quest after the healing medicine. He also informed her of the rumours that had come of the signs of the hostile Indians having been seen in the country, and this information had so aroused his fears, on account of his great love for her, that in spite of her wishes he had immediately set out on the trail in search of her.

Of course, he very easily obtained her forgiveness, and very grateful indeed and proud was she of her lover who had risked so much for her. When the first glimmering of eastern

light appeared, they made their few preparations for the long return journey to her home. As Memotas began making a bundle out of the valuable guns which had now come into his possession, he noticed with pleasure a peculiar smile of satisfaction on the bright face of Nabuno. On his inquiring the reason, she candidly told him, in a laughing way, that in those guns he had the price which her father had set for her, the price he would demand from any lover who would be so bold as to ask him to part with her.

This answer delighted Memotas, for the question of that price, and how he was going to meet it, when he asked for his bride was troubling him. An embrace and a kiss were his response to the words of his beloved, and from that hour the additional weight of those guns was as nothing to him.

On account of the probability that other hostiles might be lurking in the forest, they rapidly moved homeward in single file. The light-footed Nabuno went first, and Memotas, with heavier moccasined foot, following behind, obliterated every vantage of her trail. Thus Nabuno set the pace, and so rapid was it, that Memotas, fleet-footed though he was, would not have travelled faster, even if he had been alone.

They journeyed on, not even stopping to

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shoot the numerous valuable animals which now that they must not be delayed, seemed to invite their hunting skill. Only what they required for their food, as they stopped to eat, did they kill.

So rapidly and successfully had they made a large part of the trip, that they began to have hopes of finishing their journey without further difficulty. This however was not to be.

Nabuno was the first to detect signs of impending danger. She had been moving on so rapidly that she was some distance in advance of Memotas. Suddenly he saw her, just as she reached the brow of a hill, silently sink to the ground, and then there fell upon his ears the shrill warning cry of the blue jay.

Memotas, quick to understand the signal, sprang into a thicket, and alert and armed was ready for the threatened danger which the quick-witted Nabuno had discovered. He had not long to wait for tidings, for soon the active girl rejoined him, with the news that, having been for some time suspicious on account of the cries of the "Whisky Jacks," which are the Indians' sacred birds, she had with great caution approached the top of that steep hill before them, and carefully from a secluded spot, looked down into the valley beyond and there to her dismay she saw what

seemed to be a large war party of Indians seated around a fire, and she was able to make out that they were enemies. This alarming discovery made it very evident that they must quickly and very noiselessly retire from that place. However, Memotas, taking his gun glided cautiously forward to find out their numbers, and the possibility of successful attack.

Returning with the news that there were so many that it would be madness to attempt to face them, they decided that instant flight was their only course. Nabuno, brave as she was, was cheered by the intelligence imparted by Memotas, that having often hunted in the regions in which they now were, he knew the forests perfectly, and where it was best for them at once to go. So without any hesitancy they returned to the east, hoping by making a long detour to get around their enemies and once more be on their homeward trail. That they would be eventually followed, they felt sure but they hoped to be a long distance off ere their trail would be discovered.

And now for dear life began the rapid flight of these Indian lovers. Nabuno carried a loaded gun, in case of sudden attack, while Memotas had a couple of those he was carrying also loaded, and thus they sped along. They knew the merciless nature of their foes, and were

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well aware that if they discovered traces of them, desperate and untiring would be their efforts to overtake them.

After some hours of this fatiguing travel they stopped for a little rest, and Nabuno urged Memotas to carefully secrete some of the guns he was carrying, and which must have been so burdensome. But he would not hear of it. Were they not the price of his beloved, and then he wisely argued that if they were being overtaken by their enemies, he knew of retreats among the rocks where with them, they could keep their enemies at bay.

Thus on and still on they sped. Nabuno's powers of endurance and the hopefulness of her spirits filled her lover with admiration. But human nature even among the Indians has its limitations, and so they had again to stop to rest and eat. They selected a spot from which they could have an extensive view of the wild regions through which they had come. They also judged that if the whole party were on the trail they would alarm some watchful birds, or even wild animals, that would give some evidence of the approach of their pursuers.

So well aware were they of the dangers that there threatened them that they only allowed themselves about one hour for rest, and then,

when about ready to resume their journey, there came a sudden start of alarm that told them that their position was indeed a dangerous one. A sudden rustling in the leaves caused them to quickly clutch their guns and crouch down to the ground. Hardly had they done this, ere they saw that the cause of their alarm was a magnificent, antlered deer, that coming along the same trail in which they had so recently travelled, dashed by them into the forest ahead. Rapid as was his flight, their quick eyes were able to detect a feathered arrow hanging in his flank.

XI

A MIDNIGHT ATTACK

The flight to the river—The war-whoop—The welcome sight of the log bridge—The discomfiture of the enemy—Memotas and Nabuno resume their journey—Their wigwams safely reached—The war-whoop again—The fierce attack upon the village—Nabuno and Omemee carried off as captives—The news sent to other villages of the Ojibways.

THIS sight was not an encouraging one. It told them that their enemies had, in all probability, soon after finishing their dinner, resumed their journey, and found their tracks, and were rapidly following them up. Then as this deer was discovered by some of them, they had used the bow and arrow in trying to kill him, so as not to give notice of their approach by firing a gun.

Memotas, with all his wits sharpened and with his intimate knowledge of the country, resolved, that now their enemies were all in the rear, to make a straight dash for the river where the log crossed it, and if by that time their enemies were close at hand, to there make a stand against them. This plan de-

lighted the brave Nabuno, and so they resolved to carry it out. But it was desperate work. They were still a long way off and the trail was very difficult. Fallen trees and large rocks abounded everywhere. Over them they had to bound or climb, and for miles they had to urge their weary way through the dense underbrush or thorny briars.

But love and life inspired and nerved them, and so some time before sundown they heard the welcome sound of the wild music of the rushing roaring river, as it dashed along and fretted and fumed among the great rocks.

Memotas' knowledge of the country had been of the greatest service to him for he had made no mistake, and yonder far away are the high rocks near which is that tree-bridge where he first saw his beloved. They are breathing more freely now, for the very sight of the spot, now dear to them both, seems to tell of deliverance.

But what is that? Far behind them, they hear that sound that on the frontier settlements has sent a chill to many a mother's heart as she clasped her babe to her bosom. It is the blood-curdling war-whoop of the Indians.

Their pursuers had at length caught the sound of the river, and knowing that there was no boat, or bridge, or ford, imagined that

their victims were now in their power, and, letting all of their caution go to the winds, they exultantly shouted their war-cries.

But the old proverb, thousands of years old : "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip," sometimes comes true in an Indian country, as it did in ancient Greece.

Our lovers speedily reached the log, and with cautious tread were soon across the raging river. Then rapidly they arranged their plans. Memotas quickly began piling up some large rock-like stones, at a spot that easily commanded the rustic bridge. While he was securely making this, Nabuno, taking only her sharp tomahawk, bravely went out about half-way across the log and there industriously began to cut the rough bark.

Fortunately for her, it yielded very easily, and as she made the place before her bare and slippery, she gradually retreated backwards, so that when another horrid war-whoop was heard, not half a mile away, she had a large space made so smooth and bare that only a rope-walker would have been safe upon it. The guns were all carefully loaded, and there in that improvised fort, so cleverly arranged, that from the other side of the river its existence could not be detected, they bravely awaited the appearance of their enemies.

These now over-confident foes did not keep

them long waiting. Their gliding forms were soon seen hurrying along on the trail. They had on but scant clothing, and hence their ability to travel with so much greater speed than Memotas and Nabuno, burdened as we have seen with guns and packs.

The sight of the bridge filled them with rage, and both Memotas and Nabuno in their unseen retreat could hear their expressions of anger and disappointment. That they were much perplexed was very evident. While the hot-headed younger warriors wished to at once cross and continue the pursuit, the older ones advised delay, especially as it was now about sunset. The wishes of the younger ones, however, prevailed, and so it was decided that some of them should push on.

To Indians, accustomed to wild life in the forest, the feat of walking across a log bridge like this was not considered a difficult one, and so with all confidence, a half dozen of them, following closely together, began to make the crossing.

Memotas' plan was to allow them to reach the place made smooth by the tomahawk of Nabuno ere he fired his first gun.

On they came with reckless boldness, but the leader little imagined the trap laid for him, and almost ere he was aware of the danger his feet slipped from under him, and

with a howl of despair he fell headlong into the river. To add to their horror, the next instant a gun shot rang out, and another Indian fell off the log, dragging with him the one nearest him. Quickly they both disappeared in the dark and rapid river.

Then more bullets came whistling among the survivors, some of which inflicted ugly wounds. This was too much for them, and so seized with panic they quickly ran back into the forest, where they joined the older and more cautious members of their party, who expressed their deep disgust at the foolishness which had led so many of them to be defeated by one warrior and a young squaw!

Their marvellous powers to study the trail had shown them that there were only two persons in the retreating party and that one of them was a woman. This fact doubtless had much to do with the recklessness with which the young Indians attempted to cross the log where they were so completely exposed. Their favourite method of attack is from behind the cover of trees or rocks. But here doubtless they never imagined that a party of only two would make a stand against them. But of the fact that they were so well supplied with guns, of course they were in ignorance.

Memotas, confident that at least for some hours the pursuit would not be resumed again,

with Nabuno, took up the homeward race. Aided by the light of the moon, they sped on through the forest as rapidly as if it were in the full brightness of the day.

The village of Nabuno was at last reached. Here Memotas, after affectionately kissing her, promised to return in the morning to her father's wigwam to claim her as his bride. He then speedily hurried on to his own village.

Nabuno, tired and weary, after noiselessly placing the package of the precious medicine near to where her father slept, cuddled down by the side of her sister Geeta, and was soon fast asleep.

Some quiet hours passed on, and then the moon sank out of sight in the southwestern sky. The eastern dawn had not yet appeared, and before its coming there was the darkest hour of the night. Fit hour is this for those whose hearts are full of vengeance, and who are bent on deeds of carnage.

Well would it have been for both Memotas and Nabuno if on their return to their respective villages, they had aroused their people and told them that within a few hours' journey, there was a war party of their hereditary foes. But peace had for some years existed between the tribes, and these young lovers had not the long experience gained in actual war, and so they decided not to disturb their people with



WITH A HOWL OF DESPAIR HE FELL HEADLONG INTO THE RIVER

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the news, until the next morning. And thus these Ojibway villages passed some of the hours of that night in restful sleep, but not so did their enemies. For them it was not difficult to find a crossing to any of the rivers or streams of that country and, guided now by the old experienced warriors of their party, they were soon again on the trail. They reached the vicinity of the village where dwelt Nabuno, before the moon went down, and so had light enough to see where the different lodges stood, and how to arrange their attack. Then they crouched down at a distance sufficient not even to attract the attention of the dogs, and patiently waited. Complete darkness, after the going down of the moon settled upon the forest, and now like phantoms they glided to the different places assigned them.

Few sounds are more dreadful than the blood-curdling war-whoops of a party of wild Indians. Here it was heard with all its dread significance by these Ojibway villages, in this the darkest hour of the night.

Uttering their cries the Sioux warriors dashed upon their foes. Without looking to find the doors of the wigwams, they cut their way through the leather sides of the lodges with their knives. They generally tried to do this at the place where they supposed that the chief or principal man of that lodge slept.

To thus cut an opening and spring into the wigwam and there begin the work of slaughter required but a few seconds. Sometimes sudden and complete would be the destruction of all the inmates of the lodge. It was not always so, however, for the Indians of those days generally slept with their hands upon their weapons, and although naturally sometimes for a brief period demoralized by the suddenness of the attack, they often so quickly rallied, that the attacking party was worsted in the fight.

In this attack a number of Ojibways were killed and scalped, while but few of the Sioux were slain.

The wigwam of Shunio, the father of Nabuno, was rushed by three of the attacking Sioux. When by the glimmering light of the fire which burned low in the centre of the lodge, they saw that there was but one man in it, they expressed their disappointment to each other especially when they discovered that he was an invalid, too feeble to raise his tomahawk against them.

Nabuno was the only one in the wigwam, who made any show of resistance. Seizing a still burning firebrand, she used it with such effect that she badly injured one of the Sioux. This so enraged them that one of them struck

her with the hammer side of his tomahawk and knocked her senseless.

Then as though admiring her courage, as well as her beauty, they said: "Let us not scalp the sick old man, but let us take the young squaw as a prisoner." Speedily tying a large blanket around her, two of them picked her up, while a third acted as a guard, and then they rapidly retreated into the deep gloom of the forest, where they were afterwards joined by the rest of the war party. Geeta they had ignored.

Fortunately for Nabuno, when she had returned from her long journey, she had thrown herself down to sleep with all her clothing on, as is the usual custom of the people, both men and women.

The cries and lamentations that arose in the village from the women and children, were loud and pitiable. Fires were quickly kindled, for the eastern light had not yet come, and then the people were enabled to make out the extent of their loss.

Ten Ojibway warriors were found dead and scalped, while many more were seriously wounded. Six of the Sioux had fallen; four of whom were dead and two were badly wounded. These two who had been captured were bound and tied so that there was no possibility of their escape. Scouts were sent

out on the trail of the enemy to guard the village from any second attack that might possibly be made, but which was little feared, as that is not according to the habits of the Indians.

No woman of the village had been killed, although some of them who had taken part in the battle, in defence of their husbands, or fathers, had been badly wounded. But two young maidens had been carried off as captives, and one of them was Nabuno, whose sudden reappearance in the wigwam and her bravery in the fight, as told by her sick father, had amazed and pleased them all. The name of the other maiden, who had been carried off was Omemee (the dove).

Indians sometimes get the reputation of being slow to act, in reference to many things. This may be true, but there are other things upon which they can move with promptness and decision. Here was one of the latter, and although the captives were only a couple of their young women, yet for their rescue, they immediately put forth their very best efforts. Still nothing could be done by the survivors of that one village alone, to send out a rescue party against an enemy who could make so fierce an attack. With the coming of day, runners were sent out in every direction to notify the chiefs and people of the tribe, of this Sioux

war party, and their deadly work in one of the villages, and to summon a war council for advice and aid. When the runners reached the village where dwelt Memotas and his friends, they found them busily engaged in preparation for the morning meal.

The news created intense excitement and the runners were surrounded by many who were eager to hear the story of the fight, and of the number slain and wounded. In their efforts to answer these questions, nothing was mentioned at that village about the loss of the two captured girls.

The breakfast was speedily eaten and then Memotas, and about all the other able-bodied men of the village, quickly secured their weapons and were not long in reaching the village where the attack had been made. He, with the others heard, in fuller detail, the story of the battle in the darkness, and although he also conversed with some of the wounded he as yet said nothing of his exciting adventures of the past few days.

XII

CAPTIVES

The great war council—The recital of the events of the previous evening—The Sioux prisoners—Shunio's sad story—Memotas hears that Nabuno is a captive in the hands of the Sioux—His excitement and break in the council—Forgiven and honoured—The war party organized—The return of the scouts—The departure of the Ojibway warriors.

IT was with great difficulty that Memotas restrained himself from entering the wigwam of the father of Nabuno. But according to Indian etiquette, although he was the accepted lover of Nabuno, he had not as yet with his gifts, asked the consent of her father, and thus in spite of his anxiety, he remained with his friends until the meeting of the hastily summoned council. He was alert and keen however to scan the excited companies of girls and women who were moving from lodge to lodge, bemoaning their own losses, or condoling with others who had suffered. Indian women are not expected to exercise that restraint, or control over their feelings and emotions, which is such a strong characteristic of the men. And on this

tragic occasion they were no exception to the general custom. But among them all Memotas neither heard the voice nor saw the form of Nabuno.

The arrival of the great chief of the tribe, Keche-Chemon (Big Canoe), was the signal for the meeting of the council. Memotas, although disappointed at not having had even one glimpse of Nabuno, promptly obeyed the summons, and took his place among the young warriors, in one of the outer circles in silence, while the older and honoured men filled the central places around their chief.

An Indian council such as this was ever a place of dignity and decorum. The wails and lamentations of the women outside might occasionally be heard, but in the council every face was as flint, and every heart was steeled against the slightest expression of emotion.

There was no time to lose in this council and with but few words it was opened. The chief had little to say, but there was a glitter in his eye, and a look upon his face, that showed that in his heart there fiercely burned a spirit of indignation, and a stern resolve that this midnight attack upon one of his villages, should be quickly and decisively avenged. Yet so complete was his mastery over his feelings, that his voice was almost gentle, as he called on different persons to tell the story of the attack

and conflict. As each one gave his version of the affair the rest listened in perfect silence. The only movement was the passing of the black calumet, now the signal of war and revenge. Each warrior held it long enough only to take a whiff or two and then quickly sped it on. The statements of those who had lost relatives by death, were first heard, after which the wounded ones, who were able to attend the council, told how their wounds had been received, in their desperate attempt to repel the attacks of their unexpected foes.

Then, at the command of the chief, there were brought into the council the two wounded Sioux warriors who had been captured. With strange courtesy they were placed in the centre of the council room, and there unbound with the exception of a couple of strong deer-skin thongs upon their ankles. The medicine-men were instructed to examine their wounds, and then to bind them up with healing balsam.

Fearlessly these captives looked into the eyes of their enemies and listened to all that was said even if they did not understand it. They were brave Sioux warriors and so quailed not, neither did they resist, even if they knew that the motive which prompted their enemies to endeavour to heal their wounds, was not that of kindness or sympathy, but that they desired when the ordeal of torture came,

their victims should not be invalids but strong men. It was not the wish of the Ojibways to take sport out of the weak and wounded men, but stalwart warriors. To carry out this purpose injured prisoners were cared for sometimes for months before they were subjected to that torture which was often prolonged and dreadful.

Before the council broke up and after the prisoners had been rebound and removed, Big Canoe, the chief, inquired if the enemy had taken anything else beyond the scalps and arms of the slain Ojibway warriors. In answer to this inquiry, two men stood up together, and one of them was the still invalid father of Nabuno.

Memotas, although he could not tell why, felt his heart begin to beat wildly, as some strong foreboding took possession of him. What made it still more trying for him was the fact that the chief seeing Shunio's great feebleness, requested him to again be seated, while the other man first told his story.

This was quickly done, as the man had been struck down senseless early in the fight, and strange to say when he came to himself, he found that his enemies had not taken his scalp, but that they had carried off his daughter, whose name was Omeme.

The chief then turned to Nabuno's father,

and courteously requested him to remain seated, as he was so feeble, while he told the story of his loss. But old Shunio, the old warrior, was too proud to remain seated in the council and while talking in the presence of his great chief, and so, requesting aid from a couple of his friends, he arose, and with an effort began his thrilling story. To this, Memotas with all of his conflicting emotions, was obliged to listen as though unmoved and unconcerned.

Shunio at first in feeble tones spoke of his mysterious illness and then of his discoveries of the treachery of Jisookeoo, the medicine-man. Then he talked of the care of Nabuno for him and how they had found out the bad medicine that had so weakened him. Next he told of his having revealed to Nabuno the name of the good medicine that could cure him. Then suddenly Nabuno had disappeared, and for days none knew where she had gone, and his heart grew anxious about her. Gathering strength in his excitement the old man in more earnest tones continued :

“But last night she came quietly into the wigwam, and carefully looked at me. Feigning to be asleep, I watched her as well as the feeble light would allow me. One thing she did was to take out a bundle of something, and place it at my head. Soon after she lay down

in her accustomed place, beside her sister and was soon fast asleep.

“Anxious to know what was in the bundle she had placed near me, I managed to open it, and as I examined it by the light of some burning firebrands, I found that it was the precious medicine for which I had longed, and which I knew could cure me!

“Now I know the cause of the long absence of my daughter, and I felt kindly towards her, who had made such a long journey to get this for me.

“After a time I fell asleep. Then the war-whoops of our enemies were heard. Powerless to use the tomahawk as before my sickness, I yet tried to place myself before my children hoping that while our enemies were killing me, they might escape. But Nabuno, who had also heard the war-whoop of our enemies, had sprung up, and seizing a burning firebrand from the centre of the lodge, she struck the first Indian a heavy blow, as he was pushing in from the side of the tent which they had cut open. Others however quickly crowded in and one of them struck her with a tomahawk, and she fell senseless to the ground. They tied something over her face, for fear she might cry out. Then they picked her up and carried her off in the darkness.”

Overcome by the effort of narrating the

story of his loss, the old man would have fallen to the ground if stalwart arms had not been quick to aid him.

And now occurred an episode perhaps unique in Indian councils of those days, when only the chiefs and aged men presumed to speak, while the young men sat in silence and listened with reverence to their elders.

Springing up from the ground where he had been seated, Memotas in impassioned tones urged the chief to at once organize a party of warriors to follow up their foes that they might recover the scalps of their dead, and rescue the two maidens.

Frowns were on many faces while others of the council looked in amazement at the assurance of this untried young man for his presumption in proposing what was the right of a much older man to do.

Even the great chief seemed as though he had a look of stern reproof on his strong impassive face. But ere he uttered a word, Memotas, while fearful at his own rashness, but impelled on by his love and anxiety for Nabuno, bravely continued, well knowing that unless he quickly aroused them as warriors, he would be speedily pulled down and ejected from the council.

“I met Nabuno on the trail!” he exclaimed. “I helped her to obtain the good medicine

that will soon cure her father. Not only did I kill a bear and a wolf, but five of our enemies have been cut off by us in the journey of days which we made."

Then with much dramatic power he exclaimed: "And here are some of the evidences of our victories."

Saying which he quickly unrolled his bundle of captured guns, and then after a brief word of explanation about them, he with a significance and dignity that indicated him as a lover, as well as a warrior, he carried them over and laid them at the feet of Shunio, the father of Nabuno.

For the second time that council broke its stern rules of decorum, and now it was the great chief himself, who was the greatest transgressor.

Calling Memotas to his side, he made room for him on the great bearskin rug on which he sat, which was there his own distinguished seat. Kindly and cordial were the words of commendation which he uttered, as he kissed him on his brow and called him by that title, that in those days every young warrior coveted as the greatest honour which he could receive from a great chief, which was: "Ninguish," My son.

Quick to fathom the significance of the action of Memotas in placing the guns at the

feet of Shunio, Big Canoe addressing the sick man said :

“Are the gifts of my son acceptable, and is your Nabuno to be his bride ?”

“Very proud indeed am I to accept one so honoured by my chief as to be called his son, as my son-in-law, but alas! where is my daughter whose hand I would rejoice to place in that of Memotas ?”

This plea of the father brought the council to the business which it had in hand. And rapidly and thoroughly did it do its work. A strong party was organized to pursue and fight their enemies. No time must be lost, for well they knew that those Sioux warriors would make the most desperate efforts to reach their own country before being overtaken. Swift runners had already under the chief's commands been at work, and so it was not long ere all of the guns and ammunition available had been gathered, as well as a plentiful supply of bows and arrows.

The commissariat department of such a war party gave no trouble to any quarter-master. Intent on the one object, those wild warriors of the forest seemed to care little about food for days together. Some carried a small package of dried meat which they sparingly used, but beyond that they had no supplies. If away for many days at a time and confident that

they were not in the vicinity of their enemies, they noiselessly hunted some of the wild animals which they could secure without much delay. They generally ate the game they secured without cooking it as a fire would not only delay them but might also betray them. If hard pressed by hunger they could allay its pangs by using the bark of the slippery elm, or the roots of various edible plants.

Memotas, thoughtful in his love for Nabuno, secured from some of the women some pemmican of dried buffalo meat which was made more palatable by a mixture of the famous blueberries of the country. This bundle he fastened as a pack on his back where it would not be any impediment to his rapid movements or lessen his effectiveness in a fierce conflict, if such should be his lot.

Fired by the tragedy of the past night, and stimulated by the presence of the great chief, and so many of the old warriors of their nation, the rescue party of avengers were soon ready to be off. While the chief had ordered a few wise and experienced men to go in charge, he had filled up the party principally with young men. He wisely decided that as the enemy was in full retreat, the celerity and dash of his young warriors would be most likely to succeed.

Indian warfare differed much from that

which prevails in other lands. While some of the tribes were nearly always at war, yet they had no armies, no officers, and practically no discipline. It is true that they had their chiefs, whose power was often despotic and unquestioned, yet in actual conflict each warrior was a law unto himself and fought as an individual under no restraint. He was expected to use his own judgment and cunning in inflicting all the damage possible upon his enemy: when that was accomplished, he was quite certain without any orders to make the most desperate efforts to elude his pursuing foes and safely reach the security of his own land, with any scalps he had secured, or arms stolen.

It was a warfare in which the varied abilities of each warrior had full play. Hence while all were informed of the enemy, and where it was likely the attacks would be made, and were also well posted as to different rallying spots whether defeated or victorious, yet for days many of the war party were often separated from their comrades. About the only imperative rule was that when the war-whoop sounded out, and the sudden attack was made upon the doomed village all of the war party should be there, that by their combined efforts the attack might be the more effectual, and the victory the more decisive. But the instant this united attack was made and what

scalps and arms and captives secured that could be, it was every man for himself. Then were put forth their most desperate efforts to get back to their distant abodes with their plunder.

If they thought it best for their own safety to keep together, they did so, but there was no law to compel them. It was not uncommon for them when suspicious that enemies were on their trail, to break up into little companies of twos or threes, and after having thus baffled their pursuers, to rally again at some distant designated place.

When cumbered with prisoners, or with some badly wounded members of their own party, whom they dare not desert, and thus not able to travel so rapidly as they otherwise could, they resorted to the most clever devices to hide the trail from their enemies.

From this digression on Indian warfare we return to the actors in the stirring events before us. Memotas, while the warriors were gathering and being armed, gave to the chief and others a full account of his exciting adventures with Nabuno and the various Indians whom he had met. They were especially interested in his account of the combat between the two who had gambled for Nabuno, and had killed each other in deadly rage. That they were of different tribes and not both Sioux was evident when, going to the wigwam of Nabuno's father,

they carefully examined their two guns which Memotas pointed out. While on the stock of one was burnt the totem mark of a Sioux, on the other was that of a warrior of another Dakota tribe.

This discovery was a serious matter to Big Canoe and his councillors, for if the Sioux, and other Dakota tribes, had formed an alliance against the Ojibways, it meant a fierce and bloody war. However that would be a matter for the future; all that now could be done was to fit out and send off this strong party to overtake and conquer their rash enemies, who had dared with such success, to attack a village of their hereditary foes, so far from their own country.

Shunio insisted that the guns, with all the ammunition captured by Memotas should be taken and used by some of the selected warriors, whose only weapons were bows and arrows.

As the day was now advancing, and all the chosen warriors were gathered and had been well fed by their friends, they were eager to be off, especially Memotas, who could not understand the reason why there should be even a brief delay. Two of the runners who had been sent out by the chief, returned hastily to report. These men, as scouts, had been put on the trail of the retreating enemy by Big

Cance, the instant he had been informed of the attack. And now he only was waiting for their return and their report. From them it was learned that their foe was keeping together, and going in a southwesterly direction, as though making for Rainy River. They were not travelling very fast as the scouts found their first camp-fire, where they had not only left the fire still burning, but had also made but a poor attempt to hide away some blood-soaked moss, with which it was evident that some bleeding wounds had been dressed. They had also discovered where some of the blisters on the balsam-trees had been made to give up some fresh balm, doubtless to assist in dressing their wounds.

They had been able to follow rapidly on the trail, from the fact that they frequently noticed crushed leaves and broken twigs, doubtless the work of the captive maidens, when not too vigilantly watched by their captors.

With but a few words from the chief, which were suggestions, rather than orders, nothing more was necessary, and without any of the noise and cheering, which in other lands would have marked the departure of a company of warriors, these determined men glided away like so many panthers, and were soon lost in the gloom of the dense forest.

XIII

THE FLIGHT

Nabuno and Omemee's sad plight—Their courage and tact—Kindness to the wounded Sioux warriors—The rapid retreat—Various ruses—Nabuno's stratagems—The sufferings of the two maidens—The first notes of hope—The crying of a wolf.

BUT how fared it with Nabuno and Omemee, her terror-stricken companion, who had been so ruthlessly torn away from their homes by these fierce warriors!

They had not been carried into the forest very far from their wigwams before strong deerskin thongs were tied about their waists and with stalwart men leading in front and others with their weapons walking in the rear, they were compelled to rapidly speed along.

Nabuno as she quickly realized the terrible situation, saw that the best way for their own preservation was to offer but little opposition to these warriors, who would not hesitate to kill them if they found that they were deliberately impeding their progress.

Nabuno also knew of the bravery and courage of her own tribe, the Ojibways, and she felt confident that it would not be long ere an

avenging rescue party would speedily be on the trail of these Sioux. And she rightly judged that Memotas would be among them.

Buoyed up by her own courageous heart she resolved to make the best of her sad condition. She also whenever possible, endeavoured to cheer up and comfort Omemee and nerve her to be firm, for were they not the daughters of the Ojibways? So it was mutually understood between them, that as long as they were not harshly treated, they would make no resistance.

The Indian habit of walking in single file is a very ancient as well as a very clever one. It is designed to leave as few indications as possible, that could be used by a pursuing party. Here in this rapid retreat the Sioux obliged Nabuno and Omemee to walk in file with themselves, and to put their feet exactly in the steps of the warrior ahead of them. But while they were compelled to do this, Nabuno, alert and watchful was able at times in some of the dense forest places, through which they passed, to crush a leaf, or drop a twig in such a way that sharp eyes following, would notice them. In some places her moccasined foot made some tell-tale marks which were not entirely obliterated. But she well knew that her condition was a very desperate one, with its present risks and the aw-

ful prospects of death by torture by the hands of those cruel Sioux women whose husbands or sons had been killed in this war party.

When several hours of very rapid travelling had been made a halt was called and in a quiet glade a fire was kindled and some venison cooked. This very much surprised Nabuno at first although she saw that some Indian sentinels were posted to give warning if there should be any signs of pursuit. The reason of the fire was soon seen when she discovered that two of the party, one of whom was the chief, were so badly wounded that they were about exhausted, probably faint with the loss of blood. For the sick men some soup was made although there was no pot or kettle, pan or cup, in the party. A piece of deerskin parchment was gathered up bag shape and filled with water, into which were placed pieces of fat venison. On the same principle by which water can be boiled in a piece of paper, the parchment vessel filled with water blackened and crisped but stood the ordeal and the savoury soup was made and given to the wounded warriors. Nabuno and Omemee were of course kept close to the camping fire at which the hurried meal was prepared. The only sign of their being prisoners was the strong lasso-like thong tied about their waists. Even their loads were unbound, as their gen-

tle, unresisting manner and willingness to proceed, had disarmed any desire for cruelty. Their captors' only wish now was to succeed in getting them safely to their own country.

In the chief's shoulder was a great gash, the result of a tomahawk blow. All the surgery attempted had been to pack the wound with moss. Nabuno being close to him had noticed this, and so impulsively pulled off her shoulders a wrapper which was like a soft little shawl, she pointed to some live balsam-trees and by the sign language asked for some of the balsam to be brought. This was quickly understood and as the wounded man was an influential one in his tribe, the balsam was at once secured.

A scalping knife soon made a vessel from the bark of the birch-tree in which some water was brought and Nabuno was allowed to wash out the ugly wound and apply the healing balsam and then with a piece of her wrapper she carefully tied it up.

It was but a little thing to do, but it was done to an Indian and they never forget a kindness. All the apparent return given to Nabuno and her companion was that they were given a share of the hastily prepared food and then the journey was resumed with all its unrelaxing activity.

Conscious that their pursuers would find

their fire which they had been obliged to make, they decided that time was too precious for them to adopt any clever ruses to hide their trail.

When they reached the great river now known by the English name of the Rainy River, they decided to separate, as the wounded men could push on no farther at the rate they were going. They were without canoes, but such Indians had little trouble in crossing any of these rivers no matter how large. A few of the fallen poplar-trees, which are so light and buoyant, were quickly tied together by certain kinds of bark that furnished admirable substitutes for rope, and with poles and stick improvised as paddles, the crossing is easily effected.

Indians can swim like beavers and so if unable to find fallen dry timber for a raft they can generally find enough on which to tie their weapons and ammunition which are about all that they are anxious to keep dry. This they push before them as they swim across to the other shore.

Rainy River is a large stream of water, and was reached by this rapidly retreating party and their captives well on in the night.

A hasty consultation was held and it was decided to separate. A raft such as we have described was hastily formed and on it the two

wounded men with three of the warriors embarked. Great care was made to conceal the trail of the rest of the party who would continue their journey on land. Their object was to make it appear as though the whole party had crossed the river. Indentations by logs were made on the sandy beach as though canoes had been there awaiting them and in which the whole party had embarked. The place selected was very favourable, as there was a long strip of shallow water at the edge of the river extending westward. Stepping from a log as though they had there embarked in canoes the whole party stepped off into the shallow water and there some fifty feet or more from the shore they quickly resumed their march. Nabuno's heart nearly broke as she saw the cunningness of the ruse and the almost absolute certainty that her people, clever as they were, would here be long delayed if not baffled. Such is the character of the stream, or was in those days, that they were not able to walk in the water very far out before they were obliged to go ashore and continue the journey on land, but the warriors hoped that the distance they had made in the water would baffle their pursuers.

Hoping almost against hope, Nabuno now not so suspiciously watched, and the moonlight also being in her favour, continued

her tactics of the early march and wherever possible dropped the crushed leaf or twig.

Thus on and on, until it seemed as though the poor girls would fall exhausted; they continued their flight. If for an instant they held back, the small deerskin thong so tightened on their waists, that they could hardly endure it and so to escape from that misery they must make every effort to keep up the same rate of progress as their captors to whom they were tied.

Fortunately there is a limit to the powers of endurance of even such men and towards the morning a halt was called and there was a brief period of rest. Under the dense shadows of some hemlocks they dropped down like wearied deer and quickly fell asleep with the exception of a couple of the warriors who were placed back some distance on the trail as sentinels.

Sleep, blessed sleep! It comes down not only in quiet homes, and in restful surroundings but where the strain is hardest and the conflict most severe, even there its blessed ministrations are sweetest benedictions, so that life's bitterest sorrows are either lost in complete oblivion, or exchanged for enchanting dreams. And so it was here, and these two Indian maidens for a time forgot their wear-

ness and fears, and locked in each other's arms, slept as soundly as their captors.

Nabuno awoke with a start, and it was no wonder that it required a brief moment for her to realize her sad condition. But when she did, her faculties were all alert to see what could be done that would give some clue to her friends in pursuit. All she could do was to quietly tear off a piece of embroidered fringe from one of her leggins and hang it on a branch that hung low from the tree under which she and Omemee had slept. Hardly had she cuddled down beside her still sleeping companion ere the whole party was aroused by the two sentinels, who reported that the morning was close at hand and the journey must be resumed.

Without any delay the wearisome march was renewed and kept up for some hours. At a beautiful spring of ice cold water a halt was called and a hasty meal of dried meat eaten.

The two girls were allowed to bathe their faces in the water, but were permitted to drink only a little. Indians have an idea that drinking cold water is very bad for persons who are travelling rapidly. So while not allowing Nabuno and Omemee to drink much, they were equally abstemious themselves.

About noon while they were thus getting farther and farther away from her native vil-

lage there came to Nabuno, the first ray of hope. It was not very much, but her quick wit told her that there was in it something of encouragement, even if it were a doleful sound.

It was the weird melancholy howlings of a wolf, thrice repeated and it closed on the upward note, as did a similar call which some time before brought such gladness and deliverance to Isquasis.

That it was Shawandais she felt certain, but she dare not respond, or even change a muscle of her face. So without a quiver she retained the same calm fearless look she had kept from the beginning for she well knew that sharp eyes were upon her. She was observant enough to see that some of the warriors were suspicious, but she was resolved that not one sign would she show that would be of any assistance to them.

Fortunately for her, there came a break in the monotony of their retreat which speedily diverted all suspicion from her. It was the sight of a frightened deer flying by with some wolves in fierce pursuit. At the sight of these denizens of the forest the Indians merely grunted out unmusical "Ughs" at their fears and paid no more attention to the matter just then. But to Nabuno there was something that had entered her heart that cheered her,

and nerved her, and in some subtle way she was able to impart a portion of it to the more timid and despondent Omemee, as they were mercilessly hurried along.

XIV

A FRIEND IN NEED

The return of Shauwandaï—His grief and despair—How he heard the story—His departure and rescue of Isquasis—The father's welcome—The wedding feast—The lodge in the wilderness—The beautiful Falls—Metassa's arrival—The passing of the Sioux war party with the two Ojibway women captives.

TO fully understand the meaning of the weird wolf cry we must return to the story of Shauwandaï and Isquasis.

When they left Nabuno as described in a previous chapter, they leisurely travelled back to the village of Meyo-mitig. The weapons of Shauwandaï furnished them with plenty of food, for game was abundant.

As Shauwandaï was uncertain as to the reception he would get from the father of Isquasis, he placed her in the care of a trusted family of relatives, who knowing his love for her, had as deeply sympathized with him as it is possible for such people to do. They had been on the lookout for him on his return from his long hunting trip, and as his own family had left the village, they cordially received him into their wigwam.

When the news of what had occurred in his absence was broken to Shauwandais, his anger and indignation could hardly be restrained. His first wish was to go and kill Meyo-mitig, the father of Isquasis, whom at first he thought was altogether to blame. However when he heard of the visits of the conjurers, and the power of the terrible one over Meyo-mitig, his anger subsided and his revengeful spirit left him, and for a time he remained in sullen despair reclining in the gloomiest part of the wigwam, a prey to his sorrow and loss.

One day when most of the men were off on a hunting excursion, there happened to come into the wigwam a number of chattering young girls. They were all soon busily engaged with the women of that tent on some beautiful bead and porcupine quill work. At first they were somewhat restrained from their usual merry talk and gossip by the presence of the sad visaged Shauwandais in the rear of the wigwam. However they soon became oblivious of the presence of the stranger, who seemed so silent and reserved and who apparently paid not the slightest attention to them or their words. For this is the habit of men in the presence of chattering women.

At length one of the girls said to another :

“ Keeseemat, you were in the tent of Meyo-

mitig, when our loved companion Isquasis was taken away. Do tell us about it?"

At first Keeseemat was reluctant to do so but now being urged by the others, and seeing that the stranger was apparently asleep, she began and in graphic language told the sad story as we have had it from Isquasis herself.

Perhaps none but an Indian in the position of Shauwandais could have kept control over himself. But without even a quiver, or the slightest sign that he was paying attention to what was being said, there he reclined on a great bearskin while but a few feet from him an Indian maiden in pathetic tones was telling of what his Isquasis had suffered and endured.

One reason for his self-control was his intense desire to hear all from one whom he now learned had been the most intimate friend and companion of his beloved, and who under ordinary circumstances would not have dared to have been so communicative.

Shauwandais in spite of his efforts up to this time, had been unable to get any very definite information about Isquasis. His relatives had only heard of the baneful power of the medicine-man and his complete triumph over Meyo-mitig. This had been uppermost in their own thought and no wonder, for they too had been obliged to keep as their guests a couple of these same dangerous conjurers dur-

ing their long council meeting, and glad and thankful were they to get rid of men so feared and hated.

Not until the Indian maidens had departed did Shauwandais get up from his bearskin couch. Even then his words with the women of the wigwam were few. But when the men returned he told them what he had heard and of his resolve to go at once and rescue his Isquasis.

Some of the adventurous young warriors offered to go with him, but he firmly refused their help and decided that he could on such a mission do better alone.

His pack of furs and other possessions he left in charge of his relatives until he should return. And yet he said, for Shauwandais was wise and thoughtful and knew not what dangers might be in the way :

“If I come not back before the snow flies, or even before Nanaboozhoo smokes his great pipe in the North land and the haze of his smoke is on the landscape, do with my possessions as is the custom of our people when a warrior returns not to his own village.”

From the conjurers who had lived with the family in this wigwam the shrewd Indians had picked up some information and from it he at length learned where the village was in which was pitched the spirit lodge of Jisookeo, the

old conjurer, who had carried off the broken-hearted Isquasis.

While new strong moccasins were being put on his feet, and his quiver filled with arrows, and a new string on his bow, the women prepared for him food that would last for some days. This with his blanket and hatchet formed nearly the whole of his outfit, as he did not wish to burden himself with anything that would interfere with his making the most rapid progress. He even left his gun behind, as he felt that this must be a trip of silence and caution.

Shauwandais did not know a person in that part of the country into which he was entering. And naturally he feared that the influence and power of the conjurer over them might be so strong that many dangers might be his before he would be able to even let Isquasis know of his presence. How he succeeded and that so quickly, even beyond his greatest hopes, we have already seen.

The return of Shauwandais and Isquasis to the wigwam of these same relatives, not very many days after his departure in quest of his beloved, greatly delighted them all.

They listened with intense interest to the adventures of Isquasis and chuckled in their quiet Indian way as Shauwandais told of the terror and discomfiture of the conjurer.

That he would return after his superstitious fears had been so aroused and come back and ask again for Isquasis, they did not believe. However it was decided that it would be best to try and win the friendship of Meyo-mitig, for Isquasis his daughter longed to have the happiness and joy of again embracing her mother and her sisters. To arrange the matter successfully was found to be very difficult. Many plans were suggested but found to be very impracticable. At length a couple of wise old Indian men who were distant relatives of Meyo-mitig were called in and were interested in the story. After the smoking of many pipes of kinnekenick, the whole matter was at length revealed to the father of Isquasis.

At first he was grave and fearful. He seemed only to remember with terror the strange spell that the old conjurer had thrown over him, and he dreaded the possibility of a recurrence of those awful days that still haunted him. Hence he was fearful of doing anything that might again cause the conjurer to throw the witchery of his mesmeric power over him. But when at length he heard of the courage and boldness of Shauwandais, and all that he had done, especially his adventuring into the magic tent of Jisookeoo, and of his triumph over the old fellow, his courage revived, and

he felt that the spell under which he had so long suffered, was broken. He had enough knowledge of Indian superstitions to know that a conjurer thus defeated was powerless forever after. So after he had smoked his calumet for a little time in silence, he said :

“Bring back to my lodge my daughter, Isquasis, and also the young brave who had risked so much to save her !”

It was not long before the happy young people accompanied by their friends, started on the short mile's journey that lay between the wigwams.

Shauwandais had all of his presents bought at the Hudson Bay Trading Post, and his rich furs attractively arranged.

When they drew near to the wigwam, Isquasis went on ahead and in Indian fashion saluted her father, and then wept for joy with her mother and sisters. As soon as it was right Shauwandais and his friends entered. Going up straight to Meyo-mitig, Shauwandais spread out before him his furs and gifts and asked in return for his daughter, Isquasis, whom he loved and had now twice earned.

For a time the father spoke not a word, and the silence became so intense that a great gloom settled down upon them all. Then, with a great effort Meyo-mitig, who was only

now able to control his emotions, and speak as an Ojibway should, said,

"I cannot receive your gifts. You must not even offer them to me. You must take them all away again."

At these words there was a wailing cry among the women, which for a time would not be hushed, while on the faces of the men there were dark angry scowls but they held their peace. Shauwandais stood there like a statue, transfixed and rigid and he too maintained perfect silence.

"Jisookeoo, the conjurer," continued Meyomitig with deliberation, "came and with his magic powers, bewitched me. He took away all of my will power. I could only do as his eye or voice directed. He demanded that I should give him Isquasis. I was not able to resist. I gave her to him. She is no longer mine. But, Shauwandais, by your courage and wisdom, you have broken his power and taken her from him. In that I rejoice. She is yours by your own brave deeds, according to the customs of our people and by them you must hold her.

"Take away your gifts and with them set up your own wigwam and may your name become famous among our people and in your lodge be abundance as long as the sun shines, or water runs."

Saying this he called Isquasis from where

she had been nestling in the arms of her mother to come to him. Then he seated her and Chauwandais in the place of honour where they would receive the congratulations of their friends. He kissed them both and quickly withdrew from the wigwam as he felt that after what had occurred he had no place in the rejoicings of that hour.

The usual wedding feast was held. This is generally a great event among some of the tribes. Everybody comes who hears of it, and no other invitations are necessary. All are feasted as long as the supplies last, while various sports and much merriment abound. Then the visitors return to their own lodges and the young married people settle down to the duties of ordinary life.

Shauwandais was ambitious, and for an Indian industrious. His life, during the last two or three years while he had been hunting to secure the gifts needed to purchase Isquasis, was still with him, and so now he proposed after the usual expected rounds of visits with Isquasis to his relatives, to take up the old hunting grounds of his fathers, beginning on the south of Rainy River and extending some days' journey to the north.

On account of there having been occasional wars, and incursions of war-parties of hostile tribes, from the south, and even west, he did

not pitch his hunting lodge on the banks of Rainy River, but for the sake of safety on the northern side of a beautiful forest-covered hill, some distance in the interior. Here where the smoke of his lodge fire would hardly be noticed, Shawandais and Isquasis began their happy married life.

Not far from their lodge yet north of them was a picturesque waterfall, the roar of which would deaden any ordinary sound that would be made about their home. Here amidst the wild picturesque beauties of the place where the heat of the hottest summer days was moderated by the falling waters the two lovers often resorted. They repeated the different legends that they had heard associated with those romantic Falls and thus they spent many happy hours.

A few weeks after they had been settled in their comfortable lodge, Metassa, a sister of Isquasis, came to visit them. She was bright and clever and was of course cordially welcomed. She was a comfort to Isquasis who had often to be left alone when Shawandais was away on his hunting excursions.

One forenoon while the young couple were enjoying a visit to the beautiful Falls, they were startled by the excited actions of Metassa whose words they could not make out, on account of the noise of the Falls. She however

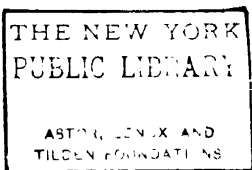
quickly reached them and told her startling story.

It seems that about the same time that Shauwandais and Isquasis had wandered off to their favourite resort, Metassa started off for a walk in the opposite direction in the forest. She had not wandered very far before she was attracted by the queer scoldings of some blue jays that were quite a distance south of her. At first she was under the impression that they had caught sight of the bright colours in her dress and hence their noisy calls. To find out if this were really the case and to quiet them if possible, for every person, young and old, was taught to be cautious in those days, she drew back a little and crouched behind a rock. Her disappearance did not stop their scoldings, and now to her surprise there were added the angry cawings of a number of crows, whom she could see were rapidly and excitedly flying over the tree tops some distance away.

Metassa's first thought was that perhaps some fierce wild animals were there prowling and it would be prudent and wise for her to run back to the wigwam from that hill-like spot on which she was crouching. Then she remembered that the experienced Indians say that crows are only alarmed by human beings, and so she thought, that some hunters of their people were merely passing through that part



THEY WERE STARTLED BY METASSA



of the forest. With this thought in her mind she decided that as they were not between her and their lodge she would before returning, try from her hiding-place to see if she could make out who they were. Then she added :

“I did not have long to wait, for there down in the valley not far from the foot of the hill on which I was hid, there passed a number of Sioux warriors, and they had with them two of our Ojibway women as prisoners. That they must be captives, I knew, for as they passed along I saw that they were tied in the line, and that the warriors seemed to be hurrying them along.”

XV

THE PURSUIT

Shauwandais' prompt action—Isquasis and Metassa prepare food for the Ojibway rescue party—Shauwandais follows on the trail of the Sioux—His wolf call cheers Nabuno—His meeting Memotas—The pursuit renewed under the guidance of Shauwandais.

THIS was startling news. The fact that a war party of their bitterest enemies had passed so near to their wigwam was in itself most disturbing, but more dreadful was it to think that two captured women of their own people had been here forced along in rapid flight.

Shauwandais was of course in complete ignorance as to which village of his nation it was that these enemies had attacked: but he did know enough of the energy and bravery of his people to be well assured that there would soon be a strong party of warriors along in swift and unrelenting pursuit. To join the warriors of his own nation was a determination at once formed in his own mind, and in order that he might be of service in aiding in the defeat of his enemies and the recovery of the captives, he resolved on prompt action. This de-

termination he communicated to Isquasis and Metassa, and it was speedily decided that while he should follow up the retreating enemy and see if he could make any discovery that would be of service, they would go on and kindle up a fire, on the spot where the war party had been seen to pass. Their object in doing this would be not only to give their friends, the rescuing party, what little information they could, but also to have food and drink ready for them, for doubtless they would be much in need of them. Shauwandais had killed a large deer the evening before, and now ere he left his wife and sister, he carried it down to the spot selected on the trail for their fire. This, with other game he had would give a hearty meal.

Conscious that a certain amount of danger surrounded them, Shauwandais gave them the "calls," he would use on his return, and also those that they should utter if the expected rescuers should arrive near to them, and naturally they would be suspicious at seeing a fire brightly burning before them, on the trail of the enemy they were pursuing. Then leaving the women already busy in preparing the venison, Shauwandais glided away into the forest, all his faculties attent to keep on the trail of the wily Sioux.

As he was fresh and vigorous, he made

rapid progress and by signs so well studied by Indians, he formed a good idea of the number of the party. But for a long time he could get no clue as to the village that had been attacked, or who the two prisoners were, although Shauwandais had a presentiment that they would, if possible, strive to outwit their captors and leave some sign.

He was passing through a gloomy defile, where but little light, except at midday, was able to penetrate. Here among some bright mosses, his quick eye detected a little piece of embroidery which had been dropped by Nabuno. So perfectly did its colour blend with those of the mosses, that Shauwandais could not but admire the cleverness of the captive in dropping it where it was so likely to escape the sharp eyes of her captors, and yet be looked for by her friends. He felt proud of his good fortune in discovering it and quickly pushed on with it, out of the gloom into the sunshine.

As he carefully examined it he saw it was of the same pattern as were the adornings of a beautiful pair of leggins that Nabuno had given to his wife, Isquasis, ere he had fled with her from the old conjurer.

This discovery convinced him that Nabuno was one of the captive maidens in the hands of the terrible Sioux warriors!

Great was his excitement, and he felt willing to run any risks for her deliverance. But his calmer judgment showed him the utter impossibility of his being able alone to rescue her. Still while he knew this to be the case, he was resolved in some way or other to communicate with her.

Sometime before midday, judging by the water in the footprints in the low damp places, where they had travelled ahead of him, and other indications so correctly read by observant Indians, he at length decided that they were now about an hour's march ahead of him. This discovery made him exceedingly cautious, as he passed noiselessly on.

It was fortunate that he remembered how interested Nabuno had been in the wolf call signals that had enabled him to find his Isquasis, and so now he wisely reasoned that if she heard it again in the way in which he had sounded it out, her quick wit would tell her that at least one friend was on her trail.

He was now becoming anxious to return to the spot where his wife and sister were awaiting the oncoming of the Ojibway rescue party, that he might communicate to them his discovery. But he must let Nabuno know of his presence. So he sped on until the sun had passed its meridian point, then he decided that

he was near enough to utter his far-reaching wolf cry. He knew that it would not be best for the enemy to be suspicious of pursuers so near. From what he had already heard of such warriors, he was well aware that if seriously alarmed, they would, without hesitancy, kill their prisoners, rather than allow them to be rescued.

And yet again he hesitated to send out the wolf cry, for it is well known among Indians, that unless it is to call other wolves to a feast, or to join in the pursuit of some large game, wolves generally howl only in the night or at sunrise. But his hesitancy and perplexity both vanished at the sight that very unexpectedly opened up before him. It was that of a great antlered deer flying by, pursued by several fierce wolves, and they dashed along ahead of him, almost in the trail of the retreating Sioux!

Hesitating no longer, Shauwandais filled up his lungs and then with all his powers sent out those weird melancholy howlings, that have struck terror into the heart of many a lonely traveller, and caused the cheeks of women and children to blanch with fear, even when safely housed within the strong walls of their cabin, in the forest clearing.

Thrice were they repeated, and as we have seen, they were to Nabuno, sweetest music, for

they told her she was not forgotten, and that some one at least was now on the trail.

Shauwandais then turned taking time only to so mark the trail, that without any difficulty he could lead the party, even in the night hours, the whole distance he had come.

It was nearly sunset when he reached Isquasis and Metassa. They had cooked the whole of the venison, and had also made birch vessels, called "rogans," which they had filled with soup for the thirsty men. They were getting anxious, for the night was near, and the excitement and anxiety of the day were telling on them.

When Shauwandais showed to Isquasis the piece of beautiful embroidery which he had found, one glance only was necessary for her to tell to whom it belonged.

"It is Nabuno's!" she exclaimed, and with a wailing cry she sank upon the ground in an agony of grief.

Shauwandais and Metassa were deeply moved. Crushing back his own emotions, in the presence of his wife's great sorrow, Shauwandais gently but firmly said, as he lifted Isquasis from the ground,

"This is no time for Nabuno's friends to weep, Isquasis, but for them to act."

Then when her paroxysm of grief was over, he insisted on her drinking some of the nour-

ishing soup which she had prepared for others. And much she needed it, for such had been her solicitude for the needs of those for whom she had been all day toiling, that not a mouthful had she taken herself.

These words of Shauwandais were all the stimulus that she now required. In a few minutes every sign of weakness and weeping was gone, and she had nerved herself, if need be, to act a warrior's part, for the rescue of one she had found so loving and true in her own dark hours.

But ere the gloaming was half over, the quiet suspense of watching ended, and other things called them to action. Isquasis, gifted with marvellous powers of vision, saw far away a phantom like form flash from the shadow of one tree to another. It was so distant and so visionary that at first she hesitated even to mention it. However it made her, if possible, more alert and watchful, and as the result she again saw another shadow flitting between two trees, and this time the vision was much nearer. She mentioned the matter to Shauwandais, whose eye had been directed in another part of the forest.

The information made them all very uneasy as the shadowy forms, real or imaginary, were in the opposite direction from that in which the warriors of their own people were expected.

Seizing his gun, and directing Isquasis and his sister to quietly move back out of the light of the fire, which in the deepening gloom of the oncoming night made them so visible to their hurt, to any approaching foe, Shauwandais lifted up his voice, and there rang out in the forest, one of the tribal calls of his people.

To the consternation of the three it was answered by the challenging war-whoop of the Sioux!

To spring back deeper into the gloom of the forest, was the effect produced upon the two women, but Shauwandais' keen ear had caught a discordant note in that blood-curdling yell, and so again he sent out loud and clear the defiant challenge of his own tribe. The effect was indeed marvellous. The forest seemed full of warriors, and now without any attempt at secrecy, they swarmed into the light of the camp-fire, fearless of ambushes or treachery. They were the expected guests, the warriors on the trail.

To those not fully acquainted with Indian strategy and cunning, a few words of explanation may be necessary.

Far away in the distance ere anything unusual had been seen or heard one of the Indians in the advancing party said :

“I smell smoke and cooking meat.”¹

But little heed was given to this statement of the Indian at first, with the exception of a little quiet banter by those nearest to him, who rallied him on being already anxious about the meat pots he had left behind. Still it made them, if possible, more alert and cautious and it was not long ere others detected the smoke, and then observed the fire.

That there could be friends on the trail over which their retreating enemies, the Sioux, with their captives had just passed, seemed impossible, and so with their cautious suspicious natures, they imagined that it was some ruse or trap of their wily enemy to lure them into an ambush.

The result was that a halt was immediately called and scouts were sent out to investigate and checkmate this design of their foes.

The scouts returned perplexed and bewil-

¹ This may seem to some inconceivable yet it is nevertheless true that some Indians are thus gifted. The late General Custer, the great American Indian fighter, had in his army as one of his scouts an Indian who detected the fire and cooking of the hostile Indians, for whom they were looking when they were over two miles away, and a high mountain-like hill was between them and the approaching soldiers. General Custer had such faith in the scout's statement that he immediately put his army in motion and after a march of some hours in the night, he succeeded in surprising and defeating these Indians on the very spot designated by the scout !

dered. All they could discover were two women, hard at work, cooking large quantities of food. But there was not a sign of lurking enemies anywhere in the outskirts. Then later scouts returned with the word that a warrior had joined the women.

Time was precious and the delay was getting to be intolerable to some especially to Memotas, and so it was resolved to surround the camp-fire and capture their enemies there, for they surely could not be any one else.

It was the sight of one of these Ojibways flitting from tree to tree that had been observed by the keen-sighted Isquasis.

When they heard the Ojibway call, they were still suspicious that it was uttered by an enemy, as they are all more or less acquainted with the varied calls of the different tribes.

Their effort to give the Sioux war-whoop was not so accurate but that Shauwandais detected it, and hence his response in the call of his own people, which at once dispelled all of their suspicions, and brought them without fear to his camp-fire.

What there was to say on either side was quickly told, for the moments were precious, and much time had been lost.

Memotas greeted Isquasis cordially, for Nabuno had told him of their romantic acquaintanceship and of their love for each

other. She was delighted when he, in some way which lovers have of letting it be known, told her of the sweet relationship that now existed between himself and Nabuno.

With the warriors gathered round him, thankfully eating the food which the women's hands had prepared for them, Shauwandais related how Metassa had observed the passing of the war party of the Sioux with their captives and then of his following them up so long on the trail, which he had marked out, and along which he would lead them. Then Isquasis showed the coloured embroidery, and explained, as only a woman can, how that it was the work of her friend Nabuno. Some merriment was caused when Memotas claimed it, and many were surprised when Isquasis, a woman, cheerfully surrendered it.

Then it was told how that they had arrived as soon as they had, because at the river, where at first it looked as though the whole party of the enemy, with the captive maidens, had embarked on rafts of logs, they found where Nabuno, doubtless with her foot, had arranged some twigs and leaves, which had put them easily on the trail again.

At the thought of leaving Isquasis and Metassa alone, Shauwandais seemed like relenting in his determination to remain with the rescue party until it had ended its labours.

But Isquasis would not hear of it. Her friend Nabuno was in terrible danger, and must be rescued. So without a thought about herself, she saw, with a strange light of gladness in her eyes, her husband, well armed and equipped, take his place as the guide of the warriors.

As soon as the warriors were out of sight, the two brave women quickly extinguished the fire, and returned to their wigwam, which was as has been mentioned pitched in a secluded spot, near the beautiful Falls.

Night though it was, yet under Shauwandais' guidance, the party resumed their journey and made rapid progress until they reached the remotest point of his journey of the day before: The spot at which he had sounded out so loud and clear the weird notes of the wolf.

Here owing to the waning light of the moon, and the erratic character of the trail, it was decided to halt until the first dawn of the morning.

Those wolf notes of Shauwandais had not been altogether despised, notwithstanding the appearance of the flying deer and his fierce pursuers. Extra caution was observed and there was some cunning doubling back upon the trail and other tricks well known, and skillfully executed, by the wily Sioux warriors, designed, if not successful in completely

throwing their pursurers off their tracks, to at least so delay and disconcert them, that their progress on the whole would be less than that of the retreating party. It was the discovery that these tactics were being pursued by the Sioux, that decided the Ojibways to stop and rest for the morning light ere continuing the pursuit.

Memotas of course chafed at the enforced suspension of the pursuit: but he saw, as did the others, that in the end they would make greater progress by the rest of a few hours, rather than by expending their energies in the almost hopeless task of keeping in the darkness on the trail of a foe so cunning.

Utterly unable to sleep, however, he sought out Chauwandais, and they two took upon themselves to act as the outpost sentinels, at the only point from which attack was possible.

There in quiet tones they talked to each other of the romantic incidents which had already come into their young lives. Memotas was intensely interested in hearing Chauwandais tell how he had won Isquasis. He then described his strange first meeting with Nabuno and their adventures in search of the healing medicine. His heart beat wildly as in quiet, but impassioned tones, he related how that in the early morning of that very day, on which he was to go with his rich offerings to

her father, to ask for her as his wife, had come the sad news of her having been so cruelly snatched away from him by his enemies. The story of his impetuous outburst in the council, and the chief's kindness, and the noble action of the father of Nabuno, were also related by Memotas.

Need it be added, that the talks of that night between these two young warriors, of such congenial natures, and both so early tried in the ordeal of suffering, cemented a friendship as firm and true and abiding, as any ever celebrated in song or story.

Refreshed by the few hours rest, those Ojibway warriors, at the first blush of morn, with Memotas and Shauwandais now at the front, continued their pursuit with little faltering or delay. This was owing partly to the fact that Nabuno in spite of the fearful risks she was running in doing so, cleverly used every opportunity to leave some mark, here and there, as they were hurried along. Then the cunning doubling back tricks of the enemy were soon discovered and used to their own hurt. These Ojibway pursuers were in their own country and were well aware of the direction their enemy must take, as the only one possible for their escape. The result was they could afford to ignore many of the erratic movements of the Sioux, and always succeeded

in striking the trail again where they knew the enemy must pass, on account of the configuration of the country.

About noon there was a sudden halt for undoubtedly something of importance was occurring.

XVI

THE ANNIHILATION OF THE SIOUX

The country of the Ojibways—Venturesome war parties—
The Sioux disturbed by a wolf cry—Wisdom of Nabuno
and Omemeé—Their hardships and fears—What is that?
Only the cry of a wolf—The Sioux war party entrapped
—Their practical annihilation—How had it happened—
Pugamagon discovers the war party—Rallies his village
—The rescue of the captives—Memotas wounded.

THE Ojibways in the days of our story occupied a vast area of country not only extending over a large portion of northern Central Canada but also reaching down into what are now the States of Minnesota and Dakota. South and west of them lay the wide prairies of the Sioux.

That a war party such as this one which was now being so hotly pursued should be found so far away from its own country may to some seem very improbable. Yet such was Indian warfare. Knowing well that the villages of the enemy near to their own borders would ever be on the watch against attack, the war parties would often in their wild reckless desire to obtain the scalps of their enemies, venture off and attack villages so remote that

five or six nights of rapid travelling were required before they could be reached.

A knowledge of the doomed village in all probability had been obtained by some of the party who may have been sent as an embassy of peace on some previous occasion. Even then their eyes had been alert to study the place and the best route to it, and for retreat, if the opportunity for attacking it should ever arrive.

Nabuno and Omemee were now being mercilessly hurried on. All through the hours of that day after the wolf cry had been heard the retreat had been more vigorously pressed. The Sioux well knew that they were in an enemy's country, and knew not but that wolf call might after all be some signal to their enemies.

Yet the brave girls although so nearly exhausted with the terrible strain upon them, neither showed any sign of fear, nor gave any occasion to their captors to deal harshly with them.

When it again became too dark for travelling they once more stopped and rested, although a number were carefully placed as sentinels, to guard against attack. The last of the dried meat among them was doled out and while a small portion was given to the hungry captives, Nabuno observed with alarm,

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that with the hunger, had come to their captors, a much more sullen and angry mood. Here it was as elsewhere. Hungry men are never inclined to be as good-natured and indulgent as those who are well supplied with food. The girls were soon made aware of this and resolved that no occasion should be given on their part, to add to the irritation of these desperate hungry warriors. They were both more than grateful that no direct personal insult had been offered to either of them, and in the consciousness that their own tribe would do everything possible for their rescue, they wisely saw that a submissive yet fearless course was the wisest and safest for them to pursue.

But their position was indeed a pitiable one, and they were the prey of many fears. What the object of their enemies was, in thus wresting them from their homes they could only conjecture. Many passed through their minds but could be thought of only with dread and terror. Were they to be the slaves and drudges in the lodges of some Sioux warriors the fourth or fifth wives of some chiefs, where they would suffer every indignity and brutality! or were they being carried away to be subjected to the long lingering torture that at times prisoners were obliged to endure, tortures so terrible that death itself was a thou-

sand times more preferable! No matter; Nabuno anyway, was resolved that if this last ordeal was to be hers, even in its bitterest agonies, she would show her Sioux enemies how bravely an Ojibway maiden could die.

Towards noon of the next day, the Sioux, with their captives, who had, from motives of safety, kept well back in the forest country, turned sharply towards the south and made directly for the Rainy River, not far from where it enters into the Lake of the Woods. Here, when the river is low, there is a place where on account of the breadth of the stream, it is not very difficult for Indians to cross.

In an hour or so they were able to see from a high hill or ridge, which they were crossing, the distant river. Although it was still some miles away they congratulated themselves with the thought that when they were once on the other side of it they would be much safer, although they would still be for some time in the territory of their enemies. Stimulated by the sight they resolved not to relax their speed even if there was more cruelty in the remorseless way in which they almost dragged along the exhausted maidens.

Before them now not half a mile away, is the gleaming river and in their ears are the murmurs of its rushing waters. Down this one defile between these two long ridge-like

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hills must they travel and then the goal of the river is won.

But what is that? And it is directly in front of them!

“Nothing but the long, low, melancholy howlings of a great wolf,” the Sioux say to each other.

But Nabuno noticed that its third swell did not sink and die away, but closed sharp and clear on the upper note.

Her heart was beating wildly now, but still she could not make herself believe that Shauwandais was in front. If he were,—and the possibility filled her with terror, and he should be so reckless as to put himself in the path of these desperate warriors she saw nothing but quick destruction for him. Thus while being so remorselessly hurried on, did these, and other thoughts rapidly pass through her mind, now strung up to a high tension by the terrible hardships of the past few days.

But there is the wolf call again! And now it is behind and it is loud and full and clear.

Nabuno is almost delirious now. The strain upon her has so affected her that she begins to think that she is in a delirium and that even these sounds are only delusions caused by her excitement and sufferings.

Only for an instant however need she thus despair, for once more the same call wails out

in front, and its effect is to stop the onward march of every Sioux warrior.

There is consternation among them and well there may be, for they are entrapped in a defile between two hills with their enemies at each end and rapidly closing in upon them!

The first thought of some bloodthirsty ones among them was to kill Nabuno and Omemee. But to this a warrior sternly interposed and said:

“No! did not one of them bind up the wounds of our chief, and do we not remember that his words were: ‘See that no harm come to either of them.’”

Thus they escaped a sudden death, but they were speedily tied with strong thongs in such a way, that they could not escape, for still these warriors hoped to be able to beat off their attacking enemies, and carry away their captives victoriously.

Dividing their forces, the Sioux quietly moved a little back and then stealthily began climbing up the steep sides of the ravine, where they hoped to be able to find cover, from which they could the more easily repel the onslaught of their still unseen, but none the less dreaded foes.

The more actives ones had no sooner reached the top than the battle commenced between the Sioux and this unexpected band of Ojib-

way warriors in front. Indian like they were apparently posted behind every tree and rock. The Sioux, in their movements to get into position, necessarily exposed themselves, and were at once fired at by their hidden foes. But they were cunning and skillful and were able to return the fire while the war cries of both sides were yelled out in fierce defiance.

For a short time the conflict in thorough Indian style continued and then there was a swift and sudden change, for the air was now filled by the war-whoops of the advancing pursuers who stimulated by the war cries of their own people in the front, cast off all of the usual caution of Indian fighters and threw themselves with reckless courage upon the Sioux.

Only for a few moments did those warriors make any effort to meet an attack like that, so utterly unknown in Indian warfare.

Brave as they were, the Sioux were soon demoralized by being thus assailed, and so when a number of their best men had fallen, those who were unwounded dashed down into the ravine, and now in mad panic with terror lending speed to their flight made for the river which they hoped to be able to cross. But in this very few of them succeeded.

The victory was most decisive. And it will be interesting to learn how it was so thoroughly won.

To clear up the mystery we must go back to the place reached by Chauwandais when he gave out that wolf call which apprised Nabuno with the fact that at least one person was doing what he could for her deliverance. But there was another Ojibway who had heard that call and it was Pugamagon, who after his long wanderings and huntings with Chauwandais had returned to his own village.

For the sake of the fishing his people were that season all encamped on the northern shore of the lake near to the spot where the Rainy River enters into it. Pugamagon who was not content to live solely on fish diet, one day took his gun and went off into the woods on a hunting excursion which he expected would last for several days.

While moving quietly along one day he heard the wolf call and at once detected it to be that of Chauwandais, his friend. Knowing well that it would not have been uttered at that hour unless for good reasons, Pugamagon's suspicions were at once aroused, and while he felt the need of the greatest caution, his curiosity was excited and he resolved to find out what was wrong.

He had not long to wait or far to search, for moving cautiously through a dense and gloomy part of the forest, an indefinable sense of danger seemed to almost paralyze him and all he could

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do was to crouch down on the ground between two mossy hillocks, where his dull smoked deerskin suit made him look as of the very earth itself. Hardly did he dare to breathe and no wonder for there within two hundred yards of him rapidly flitted by in single file a large party of Sioux warriors, and tied in the line were two Ojibway women prisoners!

As soon as it was safe for him he was up and off. He was young in years, but he had already had training enough to tell him that there was something for him to do in helping to secure the defeat of these enemies of his nation. He saw that they were going westward and as they had no country of their own which reached to the great river, he quickly came to the conclusion that they would try to reach the fords of the river and there attempt to make their crossing. In this he was the more confirmed by remembering that it had been said at his village that tracks of strange Indians had been seen at the fords some weeks before he left. But not enough had then been detected to cause any precautionary action to be taken.

Pugamagon knew the country so well that he was able to strike out in a direct course to his village. His story at once aroused his people who divined from the report of the wolf call, that a strong party of avengers were on the trail.

A war party was soon organized and as it was considered certain that this was the same company of Sioux whose tracks had been detected at the fords of the river, and that they would there endeavour to recross, it was resolved to intercept them at that spot and conquer them.

The very audacity of the Sioux in thus pushing on recklessly into the land of the Ojibways so incensed them that every man capable of fighting promptly responded and they were all in their designated places in ambush before their scouts who had been sent out returned with the word of the near approach of the enemy.

It was then that Pugamagon, who well knew the wolf call of Shauwandais, sent it out so loud and clear that it was not only heard by Nabuno and the Sioux—but it also reached the ears of the pursuing Ojibway warriors who were now close in the rear of their enemies.

Thus it was that the Sioux warriors with their captives were caught between the two parties of their foes and there almost annihilated.

But where were Nabuno and Omemeé during this decisive conflict?

When the battle commenced and the arrows and bullets began to fly over them, they quickly decided that the best thing that they could do was to crouch down as low as possible upon

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the ground. Their captors had bound them so tightly with the cruel deerskin thongs that they suffered intensely. But buoyed up by the thoughts of speedy deliverance they kept perfectly still. Their only fear now was that some of the fleeing Sioux warriors, maddened by their defeat, as they rushed by them, might dash their tomahawks into their brains. From this horrible death however they were mercifully saved as it was evident that the few survivors were too intent on striving to save their own scalps to pay any heed to a couple of women.

The instant it was evident that the battle was won, while the majority of the Ojibways especially those who were fresh, followed quickly in the pursuit of the fleeing Sioux, Memotas and Shauwandais dashed into the ravine to find Nabuno and nearly stumbled over the poor prisoners, who were crouched so low on the ground.

A few quick slashes with a sharp scalping knife severed all those cruel thongs and then Memotas lovingly lifted up the now weeping, laughing, almost hysterical Nabuno in his arms, while Omemee was at the same time tenderly cared for.

Of the bliss of that dramatic reunion between Memotas and Nabuno, I must leave to more vivid imaginations than mine. My work

is only that of the cold chronicler and so I am under the necessity of recording that ere these happy reunited lovers had had five minutes of the bliss of this reunion, Memotas fell over as one dead. Indeed such was the pallor of his countenance that one Indian exclaimed :

“He is not in the land of the living. He has joined his forefathers beyond the dark snow capped mountains on whose tops the storm clouds gather, to the happy hunting ground, in the land of the setting sun.”

“Bring water and plenty of it,” cried Nabuno, “and be as quick as you can.”

She seated herself on the ground and took his head in her lap. Her great love and quick womanly intuition told her that life was still there.

XVII

PUGAMAGON AND OMEMEE

Indian hospitality—The return of the warriors and their welcome—The old story—Something concerning Omemee—Her selfish father.

MEMOTAS was badly wounded. A bullet had gone clean through his shoulder and the blood had saturated his garments under his deerskin coat and had soaked down even to his moccasins. He had received the wound early in the battle but, sustained by his fixed determination, he had, in spite of the loss of blood, kept up until Nabuno was rescued and in his arms, and her radiant face was pressed against his own.

Nabuno's call for water met with a prompt response. Birch bark rogans were speedily improvised and abundance was soon at hand.

When Memotas opened his eyes he seemed to see none but his beloved. Whether it was the thought of all that she must have suffered, or whether it was caused by his own physical weakness, resulting from the loss of so much blood, for now he was very weak, tears filled his eyes and he could not refrain from weep-

ing, as though he were a child in his mother's arms.

Indians are skillful at dressing wounds and so here Memotas had quick and judicious treatment.

Pugamagon speedily obtained from his people fresh garments as well as the healing balsams and other medicines.

The victory had been cheaply won considering the desperate character of the foes. None of the Ojibways had been killed but a large number like Memotas had been badly wounded.

Pugamagon's people at once took all the wounded under their care and cordially invited all of the rescue party to accept of their hospitality. This invitation was gratefully accepted as all were in need of rest.

Swift runners of the village were however sent off to announce to the chief and at the different villages interested the success of the rescue party; the destruction of the enemy and the rescue of the captives. And they were not to forget to call at the wigwam of Isquasis and tell her of the triumph.

Stretchers of long limber green poles were cut and the wounded were gently carried by strong men to the different wigwams of the village.

Memotas, with Nabuno and Omemee, was

taken to the wigwam of the father of Pugamagon.

Pugamagon's share in securing the victory had been so great that he was praised and thanked as well as Indians can do such things.

Shauwandais only remained until he saw that everything that was possible was done for the comfort of Memotas. Then, after receiving a promise that he and Nabuno and Omeme would visit him and Isquasis, in their wigwam at the Falls, he and the unwounded Indians started off on their return journey.

Shauwandais found Isquasis in a state of great delight; for the runners had called and had given her the news of the victory and the deliverance of Nabuno and Omeme. They had refused to stop longer than was necessary to give their welcome message. So all Isquasis could do for them was to give each a large piece of roasted venison, which they ate as they sped onward with the good news.

Indians are good raconteurs and here was a theme capable of drawing out descriptive powers most thoroughly. So while the women listened, absorbed and thrilled, Shauwandais told of his midnight watching with Memotas and of the recital of their adventures to each other. He then described the long weary race on the trail of the enemy and of the great excitement there was among them, when they

knew they were near to their foes, and when they heard the wolf-call signal of Pugamagon. They speedily divined that it meant assistance from friends at the front. His description of the battle we need not give, suffice to say that Shauwandais stated that he could not but admire the coolness and courage of the Sioux as long as there remained a possibility of success for them. When he described the way in which Memotas and he had found Nabuno and Omemee, helpless and about exhausted, tied so tightly with the cruel thongs that they almost cut through the flesh, Isquasis wept, but she, woman-like, would not let him for a moment cease in the narration of the thrilling story. Then in graphic language he told how Memotas, wild at the sight of his beloved in such agony, threw all caution to the winds, rushed to her side and cut the cruel thongs, and then, in his joy and rapture, lifted her up in his arms from the ground and kissed her, Isquasis forgot her weeping and was filled with joy and gladness.

And then again there was another heart change and it was to commiseration and pity, when Shauwandais told of the sudden fainting of Memotas, and of his appearance so death-like, that some supposing that he was dead, chanted the Ojibway song for those who had ceased to be among the living. Nabuno's call for water, and its good effects, and then the

removal of Memotas and all the other wounded warriors to the wigwams of their friends and the cordiality of the welcome extended to them.

The news that Memotas and Nabuno would soon be guests in her wigwam filled Isquasis with great delight, but many days passed ere her fond anticipations were realized. The bullet had gone clear through the shoulder and so great had been the loss of blood that many days passed by before Memotas was even able to walk. It was fortunate for him that he had fallen into such good hands. Nourishing soup and game, with the most loving and unremitting care of Nabuno and Omemee at length triumphed and slowly his strength and vigour returned. The other wounded warriors had ere this recovered sufficiently to return to their various homes.

Some of Omemee's relatives had suggested that she should return with them, but to this proposition Nabuno most strongly objected. Her plea was that as they had been dragged off together as captives so let them now in their glad freedom return together.

This also was the thought of the chief and of the head man of the wigwam in which they were abiding.

"Venison and fish in abundance we have," he said, "and so let all remain until the

wounds of Memotas are healed, then let the two maidens who have been in captivity together, in freedom return together to their friends."

Then Pugamagon spoke up, and he also pleaded that there should be no hurry in the going of Omemee. And while all admired him and thought in their hearts that there was nothing too good for him who had shown such wisdom, they were surprised that a young man should thus open his mouth and speak on a matter that concerned him not. But when they returned and looked into the sweet face of Omemee their hearts divined the reason why Pugamagon, the brave, had spoken, and so they all said :

"It is settled: Omemee shall stay."

And so her relatives returned without her. But when they reached their village and Omemee was not with them, the anger of her father was great, but her mother, when she heard that her child was so well cared for, did not mourn that she was still absent.

Thus far but little has been said about Omemee. She was about the same age as Nabuno, but was of a shy and timid nature. Her fond, weak mother had tried to keep her in the background, and like some other foolish mothers of whiter skin, had imagined that the longer she kept her as a child, the longer she would

hold her love. She had three sturdy little brothers, and such was the jealous whim of her mother, that they were Omemee's only companions, although she had reached the age of young womanhood.

Her father was a cold, selfish man. Not entering into any of his wife's ideas his only thought concerning Omemee, who had really become an attractive maiden, was the price that he could obtain for her when suitors came seeking for her. One had indeed already appeared. He was an old man of forbidding looks and repellent ways. Some days before the attack of the Sioux war party he had come unexpectedly into the wigwam of Pukwaka, the father of Omemee, and after he had eaten and smoked he let the father know, in the presence of the mother, that he was not averse to taking Omemee as an additional wife, provided the price demanded was not too great.

The mother, as far as she dare, at once protested against such a thing.

"Omemee," she said, "is but a child yet."

Even the father was not favourably impressed with him, so stern and cold did he seem, until he found out that this old fellow was, for an Indian, rich, and capable of paying largely for Omemee, if he decided he wanted her. Fortunately for Omemee nothing had been

said to her on the subject of this old man's visit and the reason why he and her father were having so many earnest talks, yet in her heart there was some indefinable dislike to him and a foreboding that his coming meant no good to her.

This was how the matter stood when the attack was made on the village and the two maidens were so suddenly carried away.

The news of the victory and the rescue of the captives of course gave great satisfaction to the people. That none of their own warriors had been killed was a cause of rejoicing, and they were prepared to welcome back with gladness the wounded ones when they would be able to return, as well as the two rescued maidens. Yet Indian like they said but little about the matter and went on in their usual way.

There was however one exception to this apparent stoical calm and patient waiting, and that one was the father of Omemee. His selfish fears were aroused and his fears were that now that his daughter had come into such prominence by her rescue, some audacious young warrior or hunter might dare to fall in love with her and thus imperil his chances of disposing of her as he chose.

This was exactly what had happened, and the name of the young lover was Pugamagon. If it takes the fiery testing to bring the gold



PUGAMAGON AND OMEMEE

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out of the dross, how true it is that in many a human life some great ordeal or trial of suffering is necessary to bring to the light the wealth of affection that has there been long lying dormant.

A good example of this truth was seen here in the case of Omemee, kept in the background and ignored ; none knew, not even herself, what was in her until this terrible trial came. At first when captured, she was completely overwhelmed, and acted as a child, which she had been taught by her mother to believe she still was. But when she saw the courage of Nabuno and felt the thrill of her brave cheery words, she was speedily transformed into a courageous woman, and from that hour all through those days of agony and suffering, she never once quailed in the fearful ordeal through which she and Nabuno were obliged to pass.

Indian courtships are never very long, that is if the young lovers can have anything to say in the matter themselves. There may be long delays before the marriage is consummated but when Indians fall in love with each other, unless there are some covetous fathers interfering, they quickly tell each other all about it.

So it was with Pugamagon and Omemee. Memotas during the days of his slow recovery

loved to go out into the sunshine and there supported by Nabuno or with his head in her lap he would listen to her cheery words or be amused by her wondrous powers in imitating the songs and calls of the wild birds.

Omemee intuitively knew that there were many hours when these happy lovers needed not her company, and so she had to seek other society or interest herself in other ways. She was quick and clever in her ways, and from the first day of her coming into the wigwam of these friendly Indians she made warm friends of them all.

Pugamagon was ambitious to excel as a hunter. While quick to act against the enemies of his own tribe in times of peril, and wise beyond his years, as we have seen, his great ambition had been to excel in conflicts with the wild animals of the forests that covered the greater part of the country claimed by the Ojibways. This was the reason why he had gone on an extended hunting excursion and while on it had fallen in with Shauwandais. He had learned many things about the wild animals, and among his recreations he had acquired a knowledge of Shauwandais' famous wolf call. Then suddenly there had come to him this opportunity by it to win renown, and in it he had not failed.

Now there had in the coming of Omemee to

his father's wigwam been a sort of a new creation. He had in the presence of this beautiful young maiden, whose sufferings had at first only won his sympathy, soon discovered, in some mysterious way which he could not understand, that her society, even if she had but little to say, had a greater charm for him than the recital of the most exciting adventure or battle with great grey wolf or bear. Thus it was evident that Pugamagon had most thoroughly fallen in love with Omemee, and when in some way that love was declared to her, she did not reject him.

So this was the present outlook. What there was before him Pugamagon knew not. He had never visited the village of her father and of him he knew only what Omemee had told him, and this had not been anything to cause a ripple on the bliss of the few happy days which they now were spending together.

Memotas and Nabuno rejoiced in this attachment which had arisen between Pugamagon and Omemee. They both had some slight knowledge of the selfish nature of Pukwaka, but they kept it to themselves, and resolved that if trouble should arise they would do all they could to help these young lovers, who like themselves, had been so romantically thrown together. And fortunate were Pugamagon and Omemee in having such friends to

help them, for the time came when it seemed as though callous selfishness would triumph and blasted would be their lives. But we must not anticipate. They were happy now as on the sunlit waters they paddled the light canoe, or wandered through forest glades or on the shore where the rippling waters made music at their feet.

Pugamagon rejoiced when at the village council he was appointed as one of the party who were to act as a guard of honour, and protection, if need be, to the now partially recovered Memotas and the maidens, to their distant homes.

XVIII

AN INDIAN WEDDING

The return journey of Memotas and Nabuno—Their welcome in the tent of Shauwandais—Among their friends—The great wedding—The gathering of the story-Tellers—The Legend of the Coming of the Master of Life, the Son of the Morning—Pugamagon's indignation—Clever schemes to aid the lovers—The lovers' meeting—Father's wrath—Omeme's brave words.

THE time at length arrived when Memotas felt strong enough to begin the return trip to his village and people. They were well supplied with everything that was necessary from the Indian standpoint, for their comfort, and so by easy stages they moved along and in a few days reached the wigwam of Shauwandais, where a joyous welcome awaited them.

Nabuno and Isquasis wept in each other's arms for some time ere they found words to express their joy at this glad reunion.

Omeme also was cordially welcomed. And so of course was Pugamagon and the other warriors of the party.

The favourite spot, at which they all loved to gather, was at the foot of the beautiful Falls where Shauwandais and Isquasis were

sitting when Metassa came flying back with the news of the passing of the Sioux war party.

In such beautiful surroundings in the company of his friends, Memotas rapidly recovered his full strength and so the last stages of the home journey were begun.

Big Canoe with a large number of his warriors, and people from various villages, welcomed them and escorted them to the council fires, where were placed in the seats of honour all who had taken part in the wild exciting race after the retreating foe which had ended in such a decisive victory.

The chiefs as became their rank spake out their words of welcome and praise. It was indeed grateful, especially to the younger men, who had constituted the majority of the party, to hear the old men say that they had proved themselves worthy to be remembered with the great warriors of their tribes whose deeds of valour in years gone by were remembered as among the greatest treasures of the Ojibway nation.

Nabuno and Omemee after merely entering the council room, quickly withdrew, as is the Indian custom, and were then hurried away by the rejoicing women.

Memotas as soon as the ceremonial council was over quickly visited the tent of Shunio,

the father of Nabuno. Here he was most cordially welcomed. The story of his courage and bravery and of his severe wound, had been told over and over again by those of his brother warriors who had long since returned. To him and Shauwandais were given the chief praise, as it was declared by all, that it was the brave impetuosity of their rush which the others felt they must imitate, even if it was not according to Indian warfare, which resulted in the great victory.

Nabuno was pleased to find that the healing medicine which, at such risk and danger, she had secured for her father, had done all that had been expected of it, and that he was now strong and well.

Of course she had to tell over and over again to the interested companions that gathered around her, the thrilling story of those eventful days from her capture until the rescue by Memotas and the other warriors.

Omeme was gladly welcomed by all of her female friends. Her mother was overjoyed at her safe return. But it was different with her stern, selfish father. While he grunted out his satisfaction at seeing her, it was very evident that something was wrong with him.

He, however, was cunning enough to see that for the present it would be best for him

to say but little. Still his selfish fears had been keenly aroused by the rumours, brought by runners who had arrived a few days before Memotas and his party. These rumours were that the brave young warrior, who had rallied the war party that lay in ambush in front of the retreating Sioux, was seen very much in company with Omemee, and in fact it looked as if this young man, whose name was Pugamagon, and Omemee were very fond of each other.

Hearing of the safe return of Omemee, and roused by the rumours of her friendship with Pugamagon, old Jakoos renewed with ardour his suit with Pukwaka for her hand. In one of their conversations in a retired place in the forest, the old man offered Omemee's father a bag of gold. Gold was a rare thing amongst the Indians in those days but it was much prized and so Pukwaka, for this bag of money, promised him the hand of Omemee in the near future.

The marriage of Memotas and Nabuno was celebrated with all due ceremony and feasting. The number of deer and bear eaten, in addition to the great quantities of smaller game such as beavers, geese and ducks, was not recorded. Suffice to say that in view of the fact of what had so recently occurred in the lives of these two most popular young people

of the tribe the chiefs and councillors and other great men of the different villages were all present and there was great rejoicing.

One thing that added much to the interest and delight of the gathering, which was continued for several days, was the presence of the chief story-tellers of the Ojibway nation.

As was well known, their custom was to meet together every few years and rehearse the various myths and legends of their nation. This was that they might be remembered correctly, and so told that the younger people might hear them, and be able to hand them down to the coming generations. Thus it happened that the great gathering of the story-tellers was at the same time as the wedding of Memotas and Nabuno, and they with their friends, felt honoured in having them as their guests.

So, between the feasting, some hours were given to the relation of these old stories, to which the old as well as the young listened.

To give in detail these myths and legends would be impossible, for the eager listeners heard again the deeds and tricks of Hiawatha, Mondamon, Nanaboozhoo, Wakonda, Keche Wabun and of many others.

The young men's hearts were stirred within them as the brave deeds of the old warriors of by-gone generations were described to

them, and they were urged to be worthy sons of a race of such brave men. There was one legend that was told that produced a profound impression and as it eventually transformed the lives and changed many of the customs and habits of the people, we must refer to it more fully.

It was told by Ishkwabaw, one of the most famous of the old story-tellers of the nation. Ten years had passed since he had been seen at any of these great gatherings of his own people. During all those years he had been travelling among other Indian tribes and gathering from them fresh legends or comparing those of his own Ojibway people, with what he could hear in other places. While he found that there were some traditions that were common to several tribes, he discovered that there was one that was in part possessed by all and yet by no two alike.

When he discovered this his great desire had been to gather up the broken fragments and combine them in one complete story. Everywhere he was helped by the fact that the people of every tribe were more interested in this legend than any other, even those people who had but a shadowy remembrance of it.

The main thought of it was that there was to come a great visitor called The Master of Life, or the Son of the Morning. Various had

been the ways by which his coming had been announced. To some tribes it had been revealed in dreams and visions. To others, spirit messengers, swift as the light, had first brought the glad tidings of his near approach. Then as these tidings were so vague and uncertain, there was also among the people great diversity of beliefs as to what would really be accomplished by his coming.

Some proclaimed that he would come as a Messiah to the Indian people alone, and that he would speedily drive back the ambitious paleface across the great sea from which he had first come. Then when the Indians were once more in full possession of the land this great Master of Life would restock the prairies and forests with innumerable herds of buffalo and deer, while the earth would be beautiful with fruits and flowers, and the air continually filled with the melody of singing birds. Then under the guidance of this Master of Life, who loved peace and hated war, all of the Indian tribes would be united in one great Confederacy of peace, and there would be universal harmony.

Far away in the Sunny South land which he visited he found that there the tradition differed from that believed by many others. They declared that it had been revealed to them that the Son of the Morning should

come as a white man with a flowing beard, and that he would proclaim a universal peace among all nations, and that the Indian and palefaces were to live together as brothers in peace and harmony.

“Some Indians,” he said, “became impatient at his long delay and had begun to disbelieve the story. Others, who were ambitious, had dared to call themselves this Messiah, and had for a time caused excitement but it had generally died out and the impostors had been killed, or had fallen into contempt.”

To sum up the result of his years of absence and inquiry, he had come to the conviction that they should all look for the coming of this Master of Life, this Son of the Morning, whose presence among them would drive away the darkness and bring innumerable blessings to all people.

The recital of this legend excited great interest and was attentively listened to by all. It was declared that it was the most interesting of all the stories rehearsed. But in the excitement of the varied incidents of the wedding, the vivid impression produced by the recital of the legend in a measure died away in the minds of the greater number. Still there were some who pondered over it, and wondered when, and in what manner, this Master of Life, this Son of the Morning would come.

Some days before the wedding feast Shauwandais and Isquasis reached the village and there pitched a large wigwam. In this they entertained a number of their friends who had also been invited to the wedding.

Pugamagon was of course one of them. He was delighted to be so near his beloved Omemee, but was angry and indignant when he found that it was almost impossible to meet her. The part he had played in the rescue, made him popular with all the warriors, and he had also been publicly thanked by the chiefs, but what cared he for all that when he was kept from even seeing the object of his love!

Confident of the love of Omemee he was resolved to rescue her at any cost. He soon made confidants of Shauwandais and Isquasis and they also interested Memotas and Nabuno, who were naturally indignant when they heard that Omemee was kept practically a prisoner in her father's wigwam.

The first thing of course was to have an interview with Omemee. This Nabuno undertook and in spite of the jealous, watchful father she had a pleasant chat with Omemee. She found the maiden loyal and true to Pugamagon and so desperate that she had resolved to run away, rather than marry the stern old man, who, her father had now told her, was to be her husband.

Nabuno also learned that there was to be another interview between Pukwaka and Jakoos, on the following day, and that Omeme would only be left in the charge of her mother. To make a helper of that mother was not very easy work for Nabuno, as she was so terrorized by her cruel husband. However, under Nabuno's pleadings, mother love at length prevailed, and she promised that as soon as her husband had gone to let Omeme, under the care of Nabuno, visit the tent of Isquasis.

The plan succeeded admirably and early in the forenoon of the next day the six conspirators were busily engaged in devising plans by which the schemes of the old man could be defeated and Pugamagon and Omeme left undisturbed in their bliss.

All were delighted with the courage and spirit of Omeme. While there had as yet been no violent outbreak between her and her father, yet it was evident by her flashing eyes that she was resolved to be firm in her love to Pugamagon in spite of all that should be said or done to the contrary.

As there seemed no occasion for immediate action, it was decided that all that could be done was to keep a sharp lookout and if there were any adverse developments, to then devise some prompt ways to meet them.



HER FATHER WAS VOWING VENGEANCE

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A couple of happy hours were thus spent by the young lovers in the society of their friends, and after the exchange of vows to be true to each other, come what might, Omemee quietly returned to her father's lodge. When she drew near to it, she was startled by hearing her father in loud and angry tones severely chiding her mother. Rightly suspecting the reason, and fearless now in the conscious possession of the love of Pugamagon, to whom she had again pledged herself to be true, she resolved to face the matter at once and show that she, who had so long been considered so shy and timid, had reached a crisis in her life when she not only had something to say for herself, but courage and grit to say it most decidedly.

With this resolve in her heart, she boldly lifted the deerskin which served as a door for the wigwam and noiselessly entered. There she saw her cowed and weeping mother crouched down upon the ground while her father with one hand clenched and the other on his hunting-knife was vowing vengeance on any one who would dare to come between him and his right to dispose of his daughter as he wished.

Then turning in his rage from scolding his wife for allowing Omemee to leave the wigwam he faced her and demanded the reason of

her absence. Looking at him fearlessly she replied:

“I have been in the lodge of Shawandais and Isquasis and with them were my friends, Memotas and Nabuno. Pugamagon who did so much to rescue me from the Sioux, was also present. He loves me and I love him, and I have promised to marry him, and I intend to carry out my promise.”

XIX

GETTING A NEW TOTEM

The old conjurer again—His flight from the Windegoo—
His new probation—Shauwandais visits him—The ter-
rifying totem—Meyo-mitig's bitterness towards Jisoo-
keoo—Death of the old conjurer.

WE must now return to the old con-
jurer, whom last we saw rushing
away into the gloom of the forest,
terror-stricken by the sudden appearance of
Shauwandais, whom he supposed to be a fierce
Windegoo.

The loss of his sacred medicine-bag, added
to the rebuff he had received in the wigwam
of Shunio and Nabuno, had very much fright-
ened, as well as humbled him.

Such men however though they may be for
a time crushed and humiliated, are too selfish
and cunning to tamely give up their privileges
and honours without a struggle. So when
Jisookeo dashed out through his broken
sacred lodge, into which Shauwandais dis-
guised as a Windegoo had so intruded himself,
he hurried away to the distant abode of the
chief medicine-man of the whole Ojibway na-
tion. This great conjurer was at the head of

the whole cult, and by his extraordinary ability dominated the rest with despotic power.

Jisookeoo reached this wigwam so exhausted that for a couple of days he was unable to walk or even to give any coherent account of his troubles, except to mourn the loss of his sacred medicine-bag, and to declare that he had been nearly devoured by a Windegoo.

The Indians, who have been admitted to the mysteries of the rites and ceremonies of these medicine men, are very reticent and non-communicative about those things.

A consultation with some other conjurers was held to discuss the case of the humiliated Jisookeoo, whose fall more or less affected them all. What was said or done was of course kept secret: but they evidently refused to restore him to his standing among them unless he began at the beginning of his long probation once more. This, although it would take him months to accomplish he was obliged to undertake. The first step was to go out into some lonely spot in the wood and there fast and wait until in his dreams there should appear to him some familiar spirit in the form of some animal that should ever after be his totem. Through it he should hold converse with the spirits and it would be his good medicine to help him on to success in all his schemes no matter what they were.

His previous totem as we have seen had been the beaver and this it will be remembered was thrown into the fire by Nabuno when she had so cleverly secured possession of the sacred medicine-bag.

Younger men, when they begin this long fast to dream for the totem, were in the habit of selecting a high evergreen tree such as the pine or hemlock or even cedar or spruce, and there, on an improvised platform high up in the thick branches, excluded from all eyes, would spend their probation until the desired dream came with its animal to release them from their past.

The council of conjurers, however, in consideration of Jisookeo's age and weakness granted him a sort of a dispensation against having to make his bed in a tree-top and had prepared for him a sort of sacred lodge in a lonely spot in the forest, where he could dream his dreams and secure his totem. But the preparation of this lodge proved Jisookeo's ending. As he was too weak to make it himself and the other conjurers were too lazy, for they never do any work, they picked out two or three young men of the village and ordered them to go and build the required lodge.

One of these young Indians was a friend of Memotas and Shauwandais and had been with

them at the pursuit of the Sioux. From them he had heard much, and, among other things, the way in which Shauwandais had frightened this same old conjurer, who, now having forfeited his standing, was beginning his probation in order to regain it.

Knowing enough of these bad men, whom he, like many Indians, detested as well as feared, he resolved to communicate to Memotas and Shauwandais what he had been doing. In the various consultations which were held, it was at length agreed that the best thing that could be done was for Shauwandais to give him a totem that would so terrify him that he would give up all attempts to regain his standing as a great medicine-man.

They were well aware that they had nothing to fear from him at least for the present. He would not think of seeking revenge upon anybody until his standing was once more secured, and a new sacred medicine-bag with its carved totem was given to him as his talisman, to protect him against all of his enemies and also to make him powerful to succeed in all of his plans.

Nabuno and Isquasis were brought into the tent to hear the various plans discussed to head off this old fellow who had already given them so much annoyance. The decision arrived at was for Shauwandais to repeat the

visit made before with some additional adornings, that would add to the discomfiture of the old rascal.

As Jisookeo was even now in his lonely lodge, no time was to be lost.

Luminous foxwood was found in the hearts of rotten trees in the swampy places. Large white blankets, each made out of a hundred and sixty rabbit skins carefully woven, were so arranged over a framework that when Shauwandais with a hideous mask illumined by this foxwood put all on for inspection, it was decided that he was indeed a fierce enough Windegoo to terrify any ordinary superstitious Indian, let alone one in the excited nervous condition in which Jisookeo undoubtedly must be.

The plan of the young conspirators worked admirably. Taking advantage of a dark night, Shauwandais noiselessly entered the little lodge and placed himself at the feet of the old man who with eyes closed in a semi-unconscious condition was longing for the coming of some possible omen. In ghostly tones there fell upon his ears the ominous words :

“Be careful what you do, for I have found you out.”

As in a troubled dream, angered and affrighted at these words which had already

been so significant of evil to him, he opened his eyes in hopes that at least the totem would be better than what he imagined had been only a dream.

Horror of horrors! before him is the dread apparition of a monster Windegoo and indeed all it now says is, "Windegoo! Windegoo!"

Terrified at the apparition, and seeing that the way to the door of his lodge was darkened, the old fellow burst out through the back, and fled through the forest towards the tent of the head conjurer.

Voices in solemn tones croaked out: "Windegoo! Windegoo!" as he sped along more and more terrified at each repetition. He little dreamed that these dreaded words were uttered by the young persons he had tried so hard to injure. Confident that he would flee in a certain direction they had secreted themselves near that trail, and as he ran on it they had thus added to his humiliation as well as terror.

From the head conjurer he received no sympathy. It was evident to him that the bad medicine was too strong. A Windegoo as a totem was not even to be thought of. So now all sympathy for Jisookeoo was turned into disgust and anger and he was ignominiously cast out of the company of conjurers and ordered never again to attempt to pass as a

medicine-man. Thoroughly humiliated he secretly returned to his wigwam, and taking his two old wives and their few possessions he retired to a distant hunting-ground where the story of his fall was unknown. Here, thanks to the patient toil of his wives, for he was too lazy to do much work himself, he regained much of his health and strength, although even here he was not allowed to end his career in peace and quietness.

In the wild Indian heart, the desire for revenge upon his enemies was often the most prominent characteristic. In individual quarrels, to destroy the enemy was even the uppermost thought. Feuds and quarrels that could not be settled in one generation were impressively transmitted from father to son. A father has been known to call his son to his death-bed and there, after telling him of the wrongs that he had suffered from enemies he had not been able to destroy, solemnly layed upon the son the charge to do his very best to kill those enemies. The dying man has been known to cry out in his rage, that he had not been able to wreak his anger upon his foes, and then to exclaim: "My son, if you do not do all that you can to destroy them, I will come back as a ghost and haunt you!" This threat was the greatest and most terrible that an Indian could utter or hear.

Meyo-mitig, the father of Isquasis, long brooded over the way he had been treated by Jisookeoo. Naturally covetous, he had been anxious to make a good bargain for himself in the disposal of his daughter, but he had fallen under the spell or hypnotic power of Jisookeoo and had yielded her up for nothing.

The triumphant return of Shauwandais with her, while it had in some ways pleased him, had only added to his humiliation in others. Much as his covetous nature craved it he knew that he dare not accept of any of the rich gifts that Shauwandais had offered to him. All had been lost to him through the bad medicine of Jisookeoo.

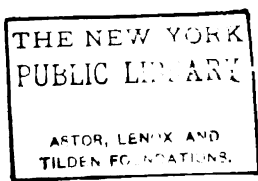
Indian like, he brooded over his wrongs until a spirit of revenge took such complete possession of him that he determined to destroy the man that had injured him.

Meyo-mitig heard from passing hunters of all that had befallen Jisookeoo; of how the once dreaded conjurer had lost his standing and had been expelled from the company of conjurers, and was now only an ordinary Indian.

Meyo-mitig pondered over this, and having discovered his hunting-ground, he resolved to go and be revenged on this man. Arming himself only with his sharp tomahawk he started on his mission of revenge.



THE DEATH OF JISOOKEEO



When Jisookeoo saw Meyo-mitig approaching, he was quick to recognize in him an enemy to be feared. Drawing his own tomahawk he stood on the defensive.

Few indeed were the words that passed between them, ere they began their duel, which would only end by the death of one or both. Indians in their hand to hand conflicts wasted no time in preliminaries. There was but little attempt at scientific sparring or fencing. It was generally a wild mad rush of brute force and a speedy clash of weapons. In one round the conflict was usually decided. There were, however, in this battle some variations from those generally fought, for these old men were wary, and knowing that it was a fight unto death, were each resolved if possible to win.

As the conflict proceeded Meyo-mitig, by a lucky side stroke, succeeded in knocking the tomahawk out of the hand of his opponent. But though placed at such a fearful disadvantage Jisookeoo was not yet conquered. Quick and resourceful he sprang back and gained time to draw his big hunting-knife from his sheath.

For a time he succeeded in keeping his antagonist at bay, but at length Meyo-mitig rendered reckless and furious by the memory of the wrongs inflicted upon him by this man

before him, sprang at him with such fury that although the great knife of his opponent was buried in his arm he succeeded in getting one hand upon his throat, while with the other he buried his tomahawk in his brains.

So perished Jisookeoo, the dreaded conjurer.

It is a suggestive fact that nearly all of the old medicine-men and conjurers, eventually died a violent death. The fear and terror that they inspired, for a time saves them from injury, but it generally happens that at length some one arises who has suffered wrongs either in his person or in his family and in some way or other succeeds in ridding the village of the hated sorcerer.

XX

CHIEF BIG CANOE

Pukwaka's anger—The lovers' council—Seeking help from Big Canoe—The great chief's enigmatical words—Omeme's shrewd little brothers solve the mystery—The Bag of Money—The visit of Keneese—The swift runners—Omeme in the tent of Big Canoe.

WHEN Omeme, with flashing eyes and earnest tones, had uttered her ringing words, she immediately slipped out of the wigwam and returned to the company of Isquasis, leaving her father amazed and astounded. Such unexpected words so bewildered him that he was for the moment unable to reply or to attempt any punishment. When at length he was able to think over the matter, he found himself in a very difficult position.

Indians, even under the greatest provocation, unless maddened by fire-water do not generally allow their anger to drive them into sudden retaliatory action. Still they are none the less revengeful, even though slow and deliberate. Even when they have had the victims of their wrath in their power, instead of venting their fury upon them, by some sudden

and terrible punishment, they have been known to smoke their pipes and deliberate long on the character of the punishment they would inflict, and then at times keep the victims of their vengeance for weeks and even months in lingering torture.

This insult offered to Pukwaka by his daughter Omemee, was so unexpected and so different from any affront from a man, that when his first feeling of indignation was over, he could hardly comprehend it, or decide how to act.

To severely beat her, as was the general punishment meted out to women, was his first thought. This however he quickly saw would not do, as it would spoil all of his chances of selling her to the old Indian with whom he was even now having much difficulty in making the final arrangements.

Then he was also shrewd enough to know from the temper of the people that he would likely get himself into trouble if he dared to beat one who had lately suffered such hardships, and had been so gallantly rescued from their terrible enemies, the Sioux.

So thoroughly perplexed was he that for some days he did but little else than smoke and try to think, and of course this time was well used by the young people for the advancement of their own interests.

Omeme's brave stand against the old tyrannical custom, greatly delighted her young friends, and they resolved to stand by her and give all the aid in their power. Various plans were suggested but that of Memotas was accepted as the best. It was that as he had been so honoured by the friendship of Keche Chemon (Big Canoe), the head chief, he should go and put the whole matter before him. He was emboldened to do this by the fact that ever since his return from the pursuit of their enemies, the chief had treated him with the greatest kindness. This being decided upon, Memotas lost no time in carrying it out.

He was fortunate in finding the chief alone with his calumet, and so addressing him as "my father," and receiving the encouraging response of "Ne Komis" (my son), he at once pleaded the cause of the young lovers, laying the whole matter before him.

The chief was undoubtedly interested but of course his position would not allow him to be very demonstrative. But as Memotas saw the twinkle in his eyes he felt that he had not made a mistake in appealing to him. To directly interfere in a long established usage, such as that of a father's right to dispose of his daughter, would not have been wise or politic. Big Canoe well knew it, but he was a sagacious man, and withal kind-hearted, and so it

was not difficult for him to devise a plan that would advance the interests of these young people and that without seeming to interfere with any tribal custom.

A chief was generally supposed to know all that was transpiring among his people, even to the love affairs of his warriors and hunters, and so it was with Big Canoe. He listened attentively to all that Memotas had to say as he pleaded the cause of Pugamagon and Ome-mee, and then he inquired kindly about Nabuno and other friends. But before Memotas had time to give him much of an answer the chief turned on him and with much earnestness said:

“Where did that old rascal, who wants to buy Omemee from her father, get that bag of money?”

Memotas was of course in ignorance in reference to the matter and said so.

“Well then,” replied the chief, “all you have to do is to find out from whom the money was stolen, and let the owners know, and when they get their own again, the father of Ome-mee, whom I am sorry to say has a name for being very selfish, will not be in a hurry to sell his daughter to such a man.”

Memotas could get practically nothing more than this from Big Canoe, who closed the interview with the usual: “I have spoken.”

Somewhat perplexed, Memotas returned to the wigwam of Shauwandais and as speedily as possible there was a gathering of the friends of the young lovers and to them the interview with the chief was reported. Omemee's quick wit was the first to see the meaning of his significant words. Indeed she was the only one who had learned anything that could solve the words of the chief.

We have stated that she was the only daughter. She had however three bright clever little brothers, and it had devolved much upon her to care for them. Her treatment of them had been kind and gentle and she had completely won their love. They were nearly broken-hearted when she was so cruelly torn away from them by the Sioux war party, and they welcomed her home again with great delight. Shrewd and sharp, they were quick to notice the sudden change that had lately come over their sister.

It seems that her mother had obtained some knowledge of what the father was doing, and had informed Omemee. Her fears now thoroughly aroused, she resolved to find out if possible something about these secret interviews which were being held between her father and this stern looking old man. But so carefully was she guarded that she had only poor success.

One day, when she was unusually sad her little brothers noticed it. In response to their loving questions as to the cause, she told them that she was afraid that their father was going to sell her away from them to a cruel old man and they would never see her again.

The noble little fellows were quite indignant and one of them whose name was Penasis (little bird), said :

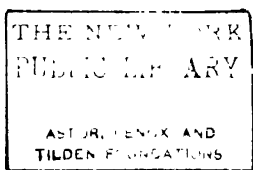
“ We saw that old man with our father in the woods more than once and he looked so bad and talked so much that we just lay down and kept very still.”

This at first very much interested Omemee and as she questioned them she found out that in their wanderings in the woods, where she had not been permitted lately to accompany them, they had witnessed these interviews between the two men.

Once they said they had all cuddled down on a mossy bank and had heard them talk. Another time they said as they were climbing up a rocky hill they heard talking over beyond. So they just climbed up from behind and as they peeked over, had seen their father seated on the bank while the bad old man stood before him, having in his hand a beautiful bag which he was showing to him. By closely questioning the boys she learned that the two men sometimes seemed to get very much ex-



CLIMBED UP FROM BEHIND AND PEEKED OVER



cited as they talked to each other about the bag.

The recital of what Omemee had thus learned from the three boys made it more easy to decipher the enigmatical words of the chief, and convinced them that it was expected of them to find out what they could about the old man and where he had obtained the bag of money. This conclusion once reached, they decided on prompt action. The village to which this old man belonged was soon discovered. Then Pugamagon and Memotas went apparently on some matter of business to that village, which was an ordinary occurrence.

They were as kinsmen kindly welcomed. While attending to the matter which had apparently brought them to the village, they were alert and watchful to get all the information possible on the subject which was to them most important. At length they heard what gave them a clue on which to work and they followed it up as vigorously as they dared without exciting suspicion.

They learned that some months before this, a couple of Indian hunters, whose abode was far north had passed through this village, with some valuable bales of fur. They only rested a short time, and then proceeded on to Fort William where they sold their furs to the Hudson Bay Company. On their return they made

a much longer visit, encamping in the outskirts of the village. They had disposed of their furs at a good price and had received for them not only a quantity of goods but a considerable sum of money which they were carrying in a beautifully embroidered fire-bag.

One night during their absence from their camp, this beautiful bag and its contents mysteriously disappeared, and no one had ever heard what had become of it! For days the owners had tarried in the village, while the chief, humiliated and indignant that visitors to his village should have been thus robbed, made the most diligent search to find out the thief. But so cleverly had the work been done that there was not the slightest clue to work upon, and as some time had now elapsed since the theft, the matter was almost forgotten.

Pugamagon was anxious to communicate at once with the owners of the bag and its contents. This, however, was found for the present at least to be impracticable, as they had returned to their distant northern home. But Memotas and Pugamagon asked for a private interview with the chief. They had to act very cautiously, as already some people had been heard to say that they believed that these young fellows had some other reasons for coming to their village than the one that had been so loudly announced on their arrival.

To guard against these rumours Memotas was selected to meet Keneese, the chief, and explain to him their suspicions and the reason of them. This chief, although subordinate to Big Canoe, was a man of influence and character and had been present when the victorious warriors and the rescued maidens had been so cordially welcomed to the tribe and thanked for their clever work.

Keneese, as he listened to Memotas' story, was indignant that one dwelling in his village should be guilty of such action. But how to act so as to convict him of his theft was the question.

Jakoos was well known as a cunning old man, and if even a slight hint reached him that he was suspected, it was certain that he would so secrete the money that it could not be produced against him.

Keneese was surprised that Pukwaka was so eager to obtain the purse and money as he must have known that Jakoos had not honestly obtained it, for, although the villages were some distance apart, it was evident that it was only his avarice that was what was causing him to treat with the thief. He thus felt that the two men were about equally guilty, and so after discussing the matter fully with Memotas, and striving to see the hidden meaning which was in the words of Big Canoe,

Keneese advised Memotas to return with Pugamagon to the head chief with what information they had gathered up and be guided wholly by his advice.

When they returned Memotas and Pugamagon at once sought an interview with Big Canoe and told him all that they had learned, not only in the village just visited but also from the little brothers of Omemee. The big chief listened patiently to all they had to say, as they carefully laid all they had learned before him. "I have known all of these things for some hours," he said quietly.

Then he explained to them that Keneese had sent, some hours in advance of them, one of his swiftest runners, who had brought to him all this information.

Seeing that they were still embarrassed and perplexed Big Canoe with a kindly twinkle in his eye at their confusion speedily put them at their ease by saying :

"I have sent a couple of my fleetest runners to find in their northern hunting-grounds, the young men whose money so strangely disappeared, with orders to bring them to me as quickly as possible. I have also sent a couple of my daughters to go and ask Omemee to come and visit them, and for fear Pukwaka should object, I have sent a couple of my warriors with them." And added, with a

little laugh, "They have their clubs with them.

"Return to your lodges and friends," he said in an admonitory way, "and keep in mind our proverb which reminds us that while we each have two eyes and two ears we have but one tongue. So in this matter be watchful but be silent until I send for you.

"I have spoken."

On their way back they met three smiling Indian maidens and the name of one of them was Omemee.

XXI

THE BLACK COATS

Startling rumours—The Black Coats and the Book—Much discussion—The council's decision to send for them—The reception of the embassy—The great council—Great speech of Keche Chemon (Big Canoe).

BUT while we have been confining our attention to these young lovers with their hopes and fears, there were other things of absorbing interest that were exciting the minds of the Indians.

Strange rumours had been circulating through the villages and were being earnestly discussed. These rumours all referred to the coming of the Black Coats who had with them a mysterious Book that told many things about which the Ojibways had been in ignorance, but which they had so often tried to find out.

As these rumours were being discussed at many a camp-fire and even in the councils, it was recalled by the old story-tellers of the tribes that there were still among them the traditions of the long black coats of the race of the Palefaces who had made friends with the Hurons and had stood by them even unto death, when they had been so constantly as-

sailed. But that was long ago, and now even the memory of it was dim and uncertain.

Here, however, was a startling revival of these things. Fresh runners had come in and even some of their own Ojibway hunters who had been as far east as to Thunder Bay and had not only spoken to these Black Coats, but had themselves seen the wonderful Book and had heard these palefaces tell out of it that the Keche Manito had made the heaven and the earth.

They also said that that wonderful Book had in it many other marvellous stories. Some of them they had never heard before, while some of them sounded like traditions of their own people, especially one that told of a great flood where Nanaboozhoo made the raft and on it saved the animals, and then created the new world.

As additional runners came into the village each if possible with more startling news than the previous ones, the excitement so increased that it was decided that a great council should be summoned and the matter of inviting these black-coated palefaces to visit them, should be discussed.

The council lasted several days. There was much difference of opinion. The conjurers and medicine-men bitterly opposed the idea of asking the Black Coats to visit them. By some

intuition they seemed to know that the teachings of the Book would be in opposition to their beliefs and practices. But the great majority of the people were decidedly in favour of sending a delegation to invite these mysterious strangers to come and visit them.

“We can hear their story,” they said, “and have them explain to us the contents of the Book. If it is not satisfactory, we can ask them to return to the far East from which country they came.”

The fact was they were sick and disgusted with the religion of the conjurers which brought them no peace of mind or soul comfort.

This then was the decision and some of their wisest men were appointed to go. They were to carry wampum strings of white, expressive of their good will and also to take the calumet and with them smoke the pipe of peace. They were to listen to these men for themselves and also they were to hear what the wisest of the people, who had longest heard these Black Coats, had to say about them.

In order that there might be no mistake, the party that was opposed to the sending for these men, although it was small, was allowed to select two of their number to go with the others. They would have liberty to ask any hard questions they desired, and also to state

their reasons why they did not think it best for the palefaces to come into the country.

So in due time well supplied with gifts for the chiefs and people, the deputation departed. They travelled slowly, as became the importance of their mission on which they were going. Each night they pitched their lodges and in the evenings rehearsed the words of the speeches they were to deliver.

A number of well-armed warriors attended them, not only to give dignity to the embassy but also to act as a guard, in case of meeting some adventurous war party of their enemies the Dakotas or Sioux. But about all the warriors had to do on this trip was to keep the party well supplied with game.

In due time they reached Thunder Bay, the site of the ancient Fort William, where for years the great assemblies of the whites and Indians were held. The one great discussion was about the trade in furs. The whites pleading with the Indians to hunt more; the Indians urging better pay for what they did bring. Much fire-water was consumed on those early visits and often when crazed with liquor, there were quarrels, not only between the white men and Indians, but sometimes in mad fury the red man raised his tomahawk against his fellow-tribesman.

But this was a visit that had in it nothing

in common with those of the past. It was not a fur-trading expedition, although to please the great Factor, the chief officer of the fur-trading company, they had with them some furs which were to be sold to him for the tea and tobacco and other things they might require.

The chief Factor of the Hudson Bay Company courteously invited these visiting Indians to pitch their lodges in the enclosed grounds of the company. This made it very convenient for all as the "Black Coats," whom they had come to interview, were also his guests.

The largest room in Fort William was courteously offered for the council gathering. This, however, proved too small, for the report of the coming of this large deputation of Indians to interview the Black Coats, about their religion, had rapidly spread abroad, and as there were then many Indians in that country who were also interested in these new rumours, they also gathered, anxious to hear of these new things.

Visiting hunters also, when their trading was finished, delayed their departure, and with their families lingered, that they too might learn something of this new way, and of the contents of the wonderful Book, about which so many were now talking.

At the request of all, the chief Factor who was a Christian gentleman and a man much respected by the Indians, opened the council. By his side sat "the Black Coats," the Rev. James Evans and the Rev. Thomas Hurlburt.

When the Factor had finished his address, in which he had cordially welcomed all to the gathering, and hoped that with ears and hearts open they would talk together as brothers, and, without prejudice, try to learn what was the truth and receive it. He then asked the visiting Indians, who had come on the embassy, to say what was in their hearts.

The Indian speakers thus appealed to, brought out their strings of white wampum and explained their meaning as that of good will and friendship. These they passed around, as was their custom, and as each one handled them, each affirmed his approval of the sentiments of good will for which they stood.

Big Canoe gave the first address. In substance he said :

"For many winters the Indians have had this country. The traditions of our people are that the Great Spirit gave the land to our forefathers.

"From the beginning we have had our religion ; our beliefs in the Kissa Munedoo, and the Meche Munedoo, the good and the bad spirit. We have called these two, our

good medicine and our bad medicine. One we supposed was ever to be working for our good and the other for our hurt.

“But there was so much mystery about it all. We were often perplexed to find that the bad medicine seemed to be so much stronger than the good medicine. Our love was for the Kissa Munedoo, but at times because the bad medicine seemed to be so much stronger, our people took their offerings to him and made for him their dances, to see if in some way they could appease his wrath or so propitiate him, that he would cease from doing them so much harm.

“But none of these things satisfied us, neither was there any voice to answer the questions of our forefathers, who have often considered these things and many others that are mysteries to us.

“We have had our medicine-men and conjurers, but they generally dealt only with bad medicine, and we found that they were cruel and selfish, and were really as much perplexed as were the rest of the people.

“In darkness and unrest have our fathers lived. Our eyes have been dim with looking, and our hearts sad with long waiting, for some help that would satisfy our longings for rest.

“We have listened long for some voice that



BIG CANOE

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would comfort us, but we have heard but little, and that little has given us no satisfaction.

“Thus with eyes half blinded, and with ears half closed, we have wandered or groped in many trails and ways, but none of them have led us to him who will tell us what our hearts longed for, or what did us any good.

“Thus have we lived for generations, for we cannot remember that it was any better with our forefathers, for at the camp-fires and in the wigwams, since we were children, we have heard these things talked about, and the cry had ever been: ‘we are full of perplexity and darkness, and how can we find the truth?’ Sometimes at the great gatherings of our Ojibway nations, some old story-teller would for a little time lift the gloom and fill our hearts with anticipations, when he recited some of the legends of our people. We have heard one but lately, and about it we still talk, and because we heard it, is one reason why we are here to-day.

“It told of the coming of one greater than Wakonda, or Nanaboozhoo, or Hiawatha. He was called the Master of Life, or the Son of the Morning.

“Our fathers had the legend long ago. It had nearly been forgotten. But it has come back fresh to us, and in our eager longing, we

were glad to hear it, and wish that it may come true, for we have about lost hope and have been like an old canoe drifting on the great sea.

“That something or some one would come out of the East, and drive away the darkness and bring us deliverance, was ever the belief of our fathers. But alas, many of them have died, and have gone from the darkness of this life into that which is beyond. They waited and longed through many winters, until at length their hair became white, and their eyes dim, and then they were gone. They are not now among the living. But they kept watching for this great Master of Life, this Son of the Morning, who was to come out of the East, and then they died, but with their last words they said to us: ‘Keep watching. The Son of the Morning will surely come.’

“For some time a strange spirit of unrest and expectancy has been among us. Some of our people have been so excited about these things, that they have become great travellers. They have been among other tribes and have heard wonderful things.

“When they first, after many moons’ absence, returned to us, we could not believe the strange things they had to tell us. We ridiculed them and called them great liars.

“Even some of our chiefs censured them

and asked: 'How is it possible for any other tribes to know more than the Ojibways?'

"But these stories increased until the curiosity of others was aroused and they said: 'We also will go and will hear for ourselves.'

"When they returned, we were humbled by finding that it was true, that there were other peoples who had more knowledge than had the Ojibways.

"Nothing however caused so much excitement and interest among us as the news of the existence of the Black Coats with the Book of the Great Spirit, that told all that our fathers had desired to know. And most of all we were interested, when we heard that that Book says that our legend is true, and that out of the East should come that Son of the Morning, that should bring great things to our race.

"This is the reason of our coming.

"In our councils we have talked over these things, and I speak for the greater number of our people, who are like myself dissatisfied with the darkness of the past.

"We will sit in silence and will listen to the message that the Black Coats bring. Then storing them up in our memories we will carry them back to our people. I have finished."

XXII

THE GREAT SPIRIT'S BOOK

The great council continued—The Book explained—The prayer of Evans—Speech of the opposer of the new way—The case against the white man—The reply of the Black Coats—The decision of the majority—The Black Coats return with them—Wawanosh and Waubeno lay helpers—"In the beginning."

WHEN Big Canoe resumed his seat on the mat by the council-fire, there was a silence so profound that all were greatly impressed.

Then Mr. Evans arose and in the Ojibway tongue said :

"Akwa ayumehata" (Let us pray).

He kneeled down on the mat which had been assigned him while others followed his example or bowed their heads, and he began his prayer in reverent tones, addressing the Great Spirit as his loving Father. Then as he went on he talked to Him with the simplicity, directness and faith of a child to his parents.

Hardly daring to breathe for fear of missing a single word, these awe-struck Indians for the first time in their lives heard, in their own language, the Great Spirit thus addressed.

Then if possible their amazement increased as the missionary went on and pleaded for these Ojibways who had lived so long in darkness but were now groping for the light. He besought the Good Spirit to come in His mercy and compassion and reveal Himself to them as a Father, and to give them the assurance that they were His children.

That such a thing was possible for them to know, they did not then dare to believe.

As the man of God continued his supplication, they were more than amazed to hear him thank the Great Spirit for having so fully answered the hope and anticipation of the old Indian legend in that He, the Great Spirit, had sent His only Son, The Son of the Morning, to this world and that He had come and had brought great blessings to all mankind, and therefore to these Ojibways.

And as they listened they learned that the name of this Son of the Morning, for whom they longed, and who would bring such blessings to them, was Jesus Christ.

Following this prayer which produced a very great impression on the minds of the Indians, came the addresses of the Black Coats who spake of the truths contained in the good Book and the blessings which would follow from their acceptance.

The objectors, who had come as representa-

tives of those who were opposed to any change in the Indian life, or any departure from the religion of their forefathers now made their speeches. The following is the principal address which was given by those who were opposed to any change. We record but this one in full as it contained all the objections that were advanced.

“When the Great Spirit created this world He fitted it up for different kinds of people as well as animals.

“He made three classes of men and gave them wives of their own colour.

“His first experiment in making men was the creation of the black man. The Great Spirit looked at him and was not too well pleased with His work. So he sent him to a land that was very hot where he could not tan any blacker.

“Then He tried again and this time there came forth a white man. As the Great Spirit looked at him He was not pleased with him either. ‘You,’ He said, ‘will get soiled too easily.’ So He cast the white man far East over the Great Sea and told him to live there.

“Then the Great Spirit made His third attempt at creating man and this time He was satisfied for He had made the Indian.

“‘You,’ He said, ‘are just right. You are to stay here’ (America).

“Thus the Great Spirit gave this country to the red Indians, His children. For them He made the great forests and prairies: the mountains, the lakes and the rivers. His purposes were that His red children should be hunters, and so He put the buffalo on the prairies, the deer and the bear and the beaver in the forests and the fish in the many waters.

“Then there was abundance for all. The animals were not very wild before the paleface came with his firearms, which have so frightened them that now they are so hard to approach. Then they were more easily killed by the bow and arrow than they are now with the guns. So the white man's coming with his guns has not been of any service to us.

“Then his greed for land has been very great. His cry to the Indians ever since he left his own land, where the Great Spirit put him when He created him and crossed the Great Sea, had been to the Indian to give him land, more land.

“They have driven many of our tribes and people from the hunting-grounds of their fathers and the graves of their ancestors. Then they have brought to us many diseases that were unknown among us, before the paleface came. The smallpox, the measles and many fevers, that now cut us down, were never known to our forefathers.

“Then worse than all of his diseases, yea worse than his greed for our land, and even his death-dealing gunpowder, has been the white man’s fire-water. With it he has done us poor Indians great harm. Thousands of our people has it destroyed. Why they should desire it I cannot tell. Once we were not so. The pure cold water of our lakes and rivers, our springs and fountains, was all that we needed or desired. This the Great Spirit has given to us in abundance. It slaked our thirst when we were exhausted in the chase or suffering from the heat of the summer. Its music we heard in dancing streams and in the raging cataracts. When our lodges were pitched near the great waters and the waves lapping against the rocky shore were the lullabies that soothed our children to slumber. When the storms raged on the great waters we heard the voices of our Munedoos and we kept silent while they talked. Happy was it then for us, for there was no fire-water!

“But the palefaces have brought it among us, and where is the tribe or village that has not suffered!

“It is very bad. It is all bad, for it does not satisfy one’s thirst when he takes it. It only makes him thirsty for more, and if he can get more he goes on taking it until he makes a fool of himself and becomes a curse to others.

“I am not so blind but that I can see that in some ways the paleface has helped the red man and has sold him some things that have added to his comfort, but the introduction of the fire-water among the Indians has done him more harm than all those other things have done him good.

“So my voice is against the new religion because it is of the white man, who has taken our lands, given us his bad diseases, and killed so many of us with his fire-water.”

Thus for two hours this pagan orator, in impassioned words and with impressive gestures, talked. His speech was a terrible indictment against the white man, and the saddest part of it was that there was so much truth in what he said.

In referring to what the missionaries had said about the wonderful Book another Indian said :

“The Great Spirit gave that Book to the paleface. If He had wanted His red children to have had one He would have given it to them Himself. Let the paleface, then, to whom it has been given hear what it says and do as it directs. Then when he dies he will go to the good place it speaks about. But the Great Spirit has prepared the Happy Hunting-Grounds for His red children. There his forefathers have gone. The white man has spoiled this country

for him, so he longs to join his relatives who have already passed beyond the dark mountains into the land of the setting sun. Sometimes at night he sees the spirits of the dead as they flash along the starry pathway (the milky way) to that prepared abode where there is abundance of game.

“No white man will be there with his greed for land, his diseases and his fire-water. Let the white man go to his heaven and the Indian to the Happy Hunting-Ground.

“My voice is against the Black Coats coming with the new religion into our country.

“I have spoken.”

These speeches, delivered with dignity and earnestness much impressed the missionaries.

“With sorrow,” said Mr. Hurlburt, in his reply, “we white men, here present, admit that what our red brother has said, and said so well, about the dealings of the bad white men with their red brethren, is true. His fire-water has been a curse not only to the Indians but to many thousands of white men. His diseases have also done much harm, and his greed for the Indian’s land with his unwillingness to pay a fair price for what he has taken, is very sad and deplorable.

“But all of the palefaces do not thus feel and act towards their red brothers. Many of

them deeply mourn over the evil that has been done and wish to do all the good they can to atone for the deeds of those who have so badly treated their red brothers.

“The Indians have many friends among the white people. They are anxious to show their good will and friendship. This is why missionaries and teachers with the good Book are visiting so many Indian tribes. This good Book is for all people, white and red and black. The Great Spirit is the father of all. This Book tells them all that He loves them. It tells them that His love was so great, that He sent His Son, Jesus, whom your legend calls the Son of the Morning.

“If you will receive Him, as He is here revealed in this Book, He will be even more to you than your legend unfolds. He is indeed the Messiah, the Master of Life. He is the loving Father. And we are come to ask you to become His obedient children.

“This is the good news we bring you. You need no longer be afraid of the Great Spirit, at whose voice you trembled as you heard Him in the tempest and the storm, but you may hear Him as your loving Father calling you His children.

· “This,” added the missionary, “is the reason why we are here among you. It is because we grieve over the cruel deeds of bad white

men. So we have come to tell you that there are many of us who love you, and wish you well. Let us be friends. We are all of one family, and our great Father, the Master of Life, loves us all alike."

This address profoundly stirred many of the Indians and was well received. But all the opposers were not convinced.

After some discussion among themselves the Indians by a large majority invited the missionaries to return with them to their distant villages and there tell to them and to others the wonderful things contained in the great Book.

This invitation was cordially accepted, and accompanied by two Christian Indians, who had come with them from St. Clair, and Sault Ste. Marie, the missionaries agreed to accompany them. These two Christian Indians deserve special mention. Their names were Wawanosh and Waubeno. They were Ojibways and so were quite at home with these northern red men who were of the same tribe. Years before these Indians had been visited by the missionaries at their own home, and had heard the true version of the Coming of the Son of the Morning. They studied the great Book and there in it they found for themselves that this Jesus, the Son of the Great Spirit, was indeed the Messiah, the Son

of the Morning. They accepted Him as their Saviour, and now, rejoicing in the blessings of this new way, they loved to tell the story to their relatives wherever found.

During the sessions of the great council these Christian Indians won the confidence and respect of Big Canoe and others, and in a quiet but effective way, they took part in some of the gatherings.

The return journey was one of great interest. At various places on the route where the report of their coming had preceded them, Indians gathered and were curious to hear these Black Coats. And in due time the party reached the village where dwelt the father of Nabuno. Big Canoe had made his home here, since the attack of the Sioux war party. As it was one of the largest of the villages, and central for others, it was decided that in it the Black Coats should, during their stay, make their home.

New wigwams were built for the visitors and abundance of game and fish were brought to them as gifts.

Religious services were held daily, though they were really talks about these new things and readings from the great Book. The astonishment of the people at the information contained in the Bible seemed to increase from day to day.

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Many of the Indians accepted the teaching of the Bible and a marked improvement was soon apparent in their life and conduct.

XXIII

TRANSFORMING SAVAGES

The search for the owners of the stolen money—The Sioux Indian prisoners—Their impending torture and death—The efforts of the Black Coats to avert their doom—Earnest prayers for Providential overruling—A wonderful religious service—The crucifixion scene, read and commented on—"Father forgive them"—A profound impression—The council hastily summoned.

THE two young runners, whom Big Canoe had sent off into the far north country in search of the hunters who had been robbed of their money, had a good deal of difficulty in finding their men. Indian like, these hunters were great wanderers. While in winter they hunted principally the rich fur-bearing animals, in the summer months when the fur was of little value, they spent most of their time either fishing or in hunting deer.

However, these runners pushed on from one hunting resort to another, until at length their efforts were rewarded and they heard of their countrymen who had lost their gold. Going to them they delivered a message from the head chief of the Ojibways that they were

immediately wanted by him at his village. The men were much surprised at the command, as no reason had been stated. But the head chief was not to be disobeyed. So they quickly prepared to return with the runners. Being married men they took their families with them. This did not cause much delay for the water communication was broken by few portages.

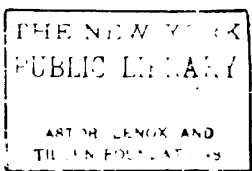
The two captured Sioux had now almost recovered from their wounds, and there was a clamouring among the vindictive and savage members of the families who had lost relatives, for the torture of these prisoners to death.

A few days before the arrival of the missionaries, a long secret council had been held, and the matter discussed. However, nothing had been decided upon, as it was thought that the captives were still too weak to bear all the punishment that ought to be inflicted upon them.

It was not many days after the return of the embassy with the missionaries when Wawanosh and Waubeno found out that there were two Sioux warriors, prisoners in the village, reserved for torture. Ojibway Indians though they were themselves, and well acquainted with the customs of their tribes to torture to death their prisoners of war, especially those caught red handed in



OFF INTO THE NORTH IN SEARCH OF THE HUNTERS



battle, yet in their conversion to Christianity, their minds and hearts had become so transformed on this matter of revenge, that they heard the news with the deepest sorrow and regret. As soon as they conveniently could they sought a quiet interview with their missionaries and told them what they had learned, giving also a full account of the attack of the scalping party and how it was that these Sioux Indians were now captives. Long and anxiously did these Christian men talk over the matter.

To ask for the lives and liberty of these savage warriors, caught red handed in their murderous deeds, did not seem advisable.

“He that sheddeth man’s blood by man shall his blood be shed,” was the ancient law in the Book out of which they were teaching the people. And so they could not but feel that if there was one class of murderers more amenable to such a law than others, surely these bloodthirsty marauders, who came many days’ journey to attack and kill a lot of sleeping Indians, richly deserved the full penalty of that law. The result of their conference was that they resolved to do all they could to have the prisoners at least saved from the horrible tortures which were generally inflicted ere death came to mercifully deliver them from such agonies.

They were perplexed and uncertain how to act even in reference to this matter. They well knew the prejudices of the people. Although many were listening to their messages yet the great mass of the tribe was as yet untouched. They did not want to do anything that would lessen their influence for good, or give their opposers, who were many, an opportunity to destroy what good had already been done. Thus in a measure their hands were tied. They were brave and fearless men, but they were men of wisdom and discretion. While waiting for light and guidance they could only feel that it was one of these crises when the voice of divine guidance was saying: "Stand still and see the salvation of God."

One thing they could do, and do it with all their ability they did, that was to continue diligently to impart the lessons of infinite love and divine forgiveness as taught in the good Book. So without specially referring to the case of these Sioux prisoners, the missionaries and their Indian helpers, carried on their religious work.

To the great delight they found that no other theme so intensely interested these Indians. Revenge had occupied such a large part of their nature, that these lessons of the Great Spirit's forgiving love were indeed a revelation. They never seemed to weary now

in hearing about the story of the Cross and all it meant, even if there was much that they could hardly understand. Infinite love making an infinite sacrifice; God giving His only Son to die for rebels. Love for hate; forgiving love the answer to murderous curses: these and similar truths deeply stirred them.

Thus the men of God toiled on, and although they little realized it at the time, they were preparing for the accomplishment of their greatest desires. They were working along the lines that after all are the ones that must be worked if the great reforms that loving benevolent Christian hearts desire, are ever really to be fully attained.

Thus day by day was the truth proclaimed. The Sermon on the Mount, and the Golden Rule were explained and illustrated by the one perfect example of Him, who "although He was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich."

Then came a memorial service. It seemed as though all the tribe were present. The trees, the pines and spruces, the birch and tamarack rose up like the pillars of a great cathedral and far above the heads of the people, intertwined their leafy branches and there formed kindly protection from the rays of the midday sun.

The opening hymns, and the earnest prayers

of both Wawanosh and Waubeno, as they talked to and pleaded with the Great Spirit, had deeply touched and moved the bowed multitudes.

Then Mr. Hurlburt took up the sacred Book and began to read in the twenty-seventh chapter of Matthew.

“When the morning came all the chief priests and elders of the people took council against Jesus to put Him to death.”

On and on, through that wonderful chapter he read. Occasionally he made a few brief comments, just enough to let those Indians know who this Jesus was and the nature and intensity of what He was suffering.

“Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called the Christ? They all say unto him: Let Him be crucified.

“And the governor said: Why, what evil hath He done? But they cried out the more saying, Let Him be crucified!”

“No answer had those wicked revengeful men to that question of the governor, ‘What evil hath He done?’” said the missionary. “He, Jesus, had been doing them good all His life. He had fed their hungry, cured their sick, unstopped deaf ears, given sight to the blind, raised the dead; but in spite of all that, they cried: ‘Let Him be crucified.’”

Thus to the end, the man of God read the chap-

ter and commented on the words so pathetic and so sad. When he closed there were tears in many eyes and deep emotion stirred many hearts.

At the conclusion of the lesson from the Word and the earnest prayer which followed, Wawanosh and Waubeno sang in Ojibway the translation of the hymn :—

“ Alas ! and did my Saviour bleed,
 And did my Sovereign die :
 Would He devote that Sacred Head
 For such a worm as I !

“ Was it for crimes that I have done
 He groaned upon a tree,
 Amazing pity, grace unknown,
 And love beyond degree.”

As their strong clear voices sang these suggestive lines, so in harmony with the Word just read, the Indians listened with intense interest.

Then followed the sermon from the Rev. James Evans. His text was :

“ And when they were come to a place which is called Calvary there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

“ Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

“ There is so much in these wonderful

words," said the missionary, "that I shall only talk to you about the loving, forgiving prayer of the dying Son of God :

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

In loving, tender words he pictured before those Indians the story of the Redeemer's Love, the one great story of the ages. He took his listeners back to the garden of Gethsemane and portrayed the agony of that fateful hour when the destiny of the world hung in the balance as the humanity of the suffering Christ quailed before the awful ordeal, and He cried : "If it be possible let this cup pass from Me." Then he pictured the rude seizure of the lonely One, who while craving the watchful fellowship of His weary disciples, and instead of receiving it, was dragged away by a rabble of revengeful men and rough soldiers.

Then followed the description of that mockery of a trial, the terrible Roman scourging and the crowning with thorns.

"Listen," he said, "to these words once more, 'And they stripped Him and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns they put it upon His head and a reed in His right hand ; and they bowed the knee before Him, saying, Hail King of the Jews !

“ And they spit upon Him, and took the reed and smote Him on the head.

“ And after they had mocked Him they led Him away to crucify Him.

“ And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary there they crucified Him.

“ ‘ Then said Jesus, *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*’

“ And then to think,” said the preacher, “ that after such treatment, such cruelties, such insults, such contempt, the loving Son of God, the Son of the Morning, our only hope of Salvation, could offer up such a loving forgiving prayer for those who had rejected Him after all He had done for them, and were even now His murderers : and whom with a word He could, if He had so desired, instantly have destroyed.

“ This is the grandeur of the Gospel. The infinite Love of God, for God is Love.

“ Revenge found no place in His heart. Neither did He wait for our love before He poured out His Love. While doubtless grieved and sorry that men were so sinful, Jesus the Son of God, now only thought of how they could be forgiven. Hence His wonderful prayer for even His bitterest enemies.

“ What lessons are here for us to learn ?

“ First, Christ is not only our Saviour and

our Elder Brother, but He is our pattern. If we would have His love and favour, we must follow His example.

“Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. How can we do this ?

“Well, one grand way will be by getting all of the wicked spirit of revenge out of our hearts, and the same forgiving spirit like that which dwelt in Christ to take its place and fill all the room.

“Too many Indians have had their personal quarrels, their family feuds and their tribal hostilities. These are all wrong and must be driven out of our hearts and lives.

“O Indians ! would you be like Jesus ? Then you must, like Him, not only forgive but even pray for your bitterest enemies.”

The service shortly afterwards closed and with but few words, all quietly retired to their different wigwams. The chiefs and councilors, however, at the command of Big Canoe were called for immediate consultation. Though they knew that the meeting had made a deep impression on the people, the missionaries sought their tent and implored their Master to make the results abiding.

XXIV

PUKWAKA'S BAD BARGAIN

The runners return—Their adventures—The conspirators captured—Compelled to appear before the council—The speech-making resumed—What shall we do with our Sioux prisoners?—The morning service—The speech of Big Canoe—Liberty for the captives—The kindly words of Keneese.

THE runners with the hunters and their wives came down by canoes. Two good canoes were quite sufficient for them and the small outfit with which such people travel. Some portages had to be made but these were crossed without any great difficulty as two men could carry the canoes, and the rest of the outfit was easily managed by the other members of the party.

They generally had abundance of food, but hunters' luck is a very uncertain thing. When they were within a day's journey of the village of Big Canoe, they did not wish to enter empty handed and so encamped. This is customary among the Indians. While but little is said in the way of criticism when a party thus returns, yet it is expected that coming in from the haunts of the deer and

other animals, they will not come empty handed.

Another reason why there is generally a halt within a day's journey of the end of the route is to give time for the women to repair all damages to the moccasins and clothing and even sometimes to wash and re-smoke the deer-skin garments, that all may make the best appearance possible when they meet their friends. It is a point of honour with an Indian's returning from a long journey, no matter how severe or trying on himself or apparel, to endeavour to appear as though no mishaps had befallen him. So leaving the women busily engaged in making all repairs and improvements possible, the men in pairs took their guns and started off after deer.

As two of them were hurrying through the woods, they found themselves approaching the top of a hill. Hoping that in the wooded valley beyond, they would see some deer, they used all precaution against their presence being detected by the game. To their surprise when they were near the top of the hill, they heard from the other side and evidently not far from them, human voices in excited discussion. Their curiosity was aroused and seeing their chances for deer were gone for the present, they resolved to find out if possible who these disputants were, and also what was the object

of their discussion. Their first fears were that they might be Sioux warriors on the war-path. These fears were, however, allayed when they heard the disputants using their own Ojibway tongue.

The wooded character of the hill favoured them, and they had no difficulty in noiselessly reaching the brow, and there, as they cautiously peered through the low branches of the trees, they saw two old men not a hundred yards below them.

Big Canoe's runner immediately recognized Pukwaka, the father of Omemee, as one of these old men; while the hunter as quickly recognized the other old man as one whom he had frequently seen in the village of Keneese.

Keeping perfectly still they had not long to wait before they discovered the topic discussed with such animation.

This was the final meeting of these two old conspirators and after Pukwaka had faithfully promised that Omemee should be, by some trick which seemed satisfactory, handed over to the old man, he gave the full purse with much formality to Pukwaka.

He did not, however, have much time to gloat over its possession for two stalwart young Indians, as though they had just sprung up out of the ground were upon them and both

of the old fellows were hurled to the ground and the purse was secured by its owner.

After securely binding the old men, hand and foot, the owner of the purse was left in charge of the prisoners while the other Indian quickly returned to the encampment. The other two hunters came in from another direction at almost the same time. They had been successful in their hunt and each brought on his back a fat young deer. In reply to the inquiries of the others, as to his success and the whereabouts of the other hunter, the runner replied,

“O, we have captured more than you have, and I want both of you men to come and help us bring in the game.”

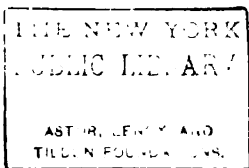
The matter however was too serious for fun and banter, and so he speedily told them of what he and his comrade had seen and heard and done.

It was quickly arranged that as soon as some food could be prepared the two men, who had made the capture, should take the two prisoners by the direct overland trail, to Big Canoe; while the other men and the women would come with the canoes by the water route, which was much longer and slower.

When the men with their prisoners arrived, the council called by Big Canoe was in session, and one of the orators was in the midst of an



GAVE THE FULL PURSE TO PUKWAKA



impassioned address. But into the midst of this council the young hunters with loaded guns compelled the humiliated old men to enter.

Motioning the old men to be seated a little back from the circle of the counsellors, Big Canoe then, as though calling up the next speaker in a regular programme, turned to the young man, who had just returned and said in quiet tones :

“ Our ears are open to hear your words.”

Rapidly and clearly, he detailed the whole thing as we have described it. When he came to the last and most exciting part of their work and related the story of the detection of these old men, and his comrade recognized his fire-bag and saw that it had passed into the possession of Pukwaka, they decided to arrest them both and bring them to Big Canoe, to do with them as he, in his wisdom, thought best. When he had finished the other young man produced the purse, merely saying : “ The old man, the companion of Pukwaka, was at our encampment the day before this disappeared.” He unfastened the handsome fire-bag from his belt and placed it at the feet of Big Canoe, near the sacred council-fire, beside the chief's calumet and tomahawk.

Then the two young men quietly withdrew.

Turning to the two old men, Big Canoe in a low, stern voice said :

“Pukwaka, take this man with you and go to your wigwam and there remain. Neither of you leave the boundaries of the village.

“I have spoken.”

Without a word, the old men gathered their blankets around them and withdrew.

Strange and abrupt as this interruption may appear to have been, yet it was the Indian's way. When the head chief sent off messengers on important matters, their duty was to report to him immediately on their return. If he were asleep, without any ceremony, they were expected to at once arouse him from his slumbers. If he were in the midst of a great council, their position as the chief's messengers was quite sufficient to authorize them to at once enter and report, as in this case.

Turning to the speaker, whose address had been so abruptly checked by the entrance of the runners and their prisoners, Big Canoe nodded to him to proceed. Resuming his discourse where he left off the orator continued, as though there had been no interruption in his speech. As we listen we find that the subject he is discussing is: “What shall be done with the Sioux prisoners?”

We are not kept long in waiting ere we find that this speaker is pleading most earnestly for the deliverance of the captives and that

they be allowed to return uninjured to their own people.

To this there are some protests, and they are only from some of the oldest pagans, who had kept aloof from the religious services held by the missionaries and were not very influential men. They tried to plead the customs of their forefathers and the necessity of seeking revenge for those who had been killed. They also declared that to liberate these Sioux prisoners would be accounted by their enemies as an act of cowardice, that would only prompt them to greater deeds of hostility and bloodshed. These mutterings of revenge, however, found no place in the hearts of the great majority, and so to Big Canoe was left the work of carrying out in his own way what was the wish of the people in harmony with the teachings of the Great Spirit as revealed in His Book and explained to them by His servants.

Not a hint of the action of the council had been conveyed to the missionaries or their friends. Still there was that indefinable something in the very air that told of some crisis that was approaching.

When the service on the next morning opened the missionaries noticed that quite an open space in front of them was kept clear from the crowd that generally thronged it. The chief and all his subordinates were ar-

ranged according to their rank and all heavily armed.

Hymns were sung and earnest prayers offered up and then short addresses were made by both of the missionaries and also by Waubeno and Wawanosh. The addresses of these two Christian Indians were principally the stories of their own conversion.

“It was,” they said, “because of the great love of the Good Spirit in giving His Son to die for them that had broken down their once proud, revengeful natures, so that now they had nothing but love in their hearts towards all mankind.”

Then turning to the now interested crowd of Indians, one of them, with the boldness of Peter on the day of Pentecost, exclaimed :

“Remember, O my brothers, what was said yesterday—‘If you really want the Great Spirit to forgive you and make you His children, you must do as did the Son of God, even Jesus, not only forgive your bitterest enemies but also ‘even those who have done you the greatest harm.’”

As he resumed his seat Big Canoe arose. He was outwardly calm, but it was easy to see that he was deeply agitated, and that it required all of his strong nature to keep himself under control. Turning to his young braves, he said :

"Bring to me the Sioux prisoners."

To the surprise of the missionaries, the stalwart young fellows only went to the lodge of the chief which was close at hand, and soon returned with the two men. Politely asking them to be seated on the mats in the reserved open space, the chief began :

"For long years there has been enmity between the Ojibways and the Sioux. We have killed each other whenever we could. We have taken each other's scalps and have been bitter enemies. This last attack of our foes was a very cruel one, as it was understood that for the present there was a truce between us. Those captured in such a raid, where a number of our warriors fell and two of our young maidens were carried off, deserved to be tortured and then killed according to all the traditions of our people.

"To torture and then put them to a cruel death was our purpose. We were but waiting for them to recover, and be strong again that their suffering would be the more severe.

"But a change has come over us. The Great Spirit has sent to us from the East His servants with His Book. It has opened our eyes. It has been so different from any thought of before.

"It has shown us that while it was right for us to love our friends it was our duty also to

love our enemies. This was hard for us to believe. We all at first disputed it, and even said it was impossible. But after hearing what we did yesterday we see that our old life was wrong.

“We have heard our fathers in their traditions talk about the coming of the Son of the Morning and that when He came, we were to hear and obey His words. He has come, and His name, we have learned, is Jesus. How He acted we have been told. What He did we have heard. What His prayer was, was given to us yesterday.

“To have the favour of the Good Spirit, our Heavenly Father, we have been told we must imitate the Son and forgive our enemies, even those who have done us the greatest harm.

“These Sioux attacked one of my villages in the night. They killed ten of my braves. They tore off their scalps. Their bodies are among our dead. Widows and children and relatives mourn. Our old Ojibway hearts cry for vengeance. They were our enemies who did us great harm—but not more than His enemies did to Him. And so as He, the Son of the Morning, the longing Hope of our people, forgave His enemies, so we forgive these——” saying this he went to the Sioux Indians and cutting the sole thong that tied them, he gave them their liberty.

Then Chief Keneese, who understood the

language of the Sioux, spoke to them in their own tongue :

“All enmity towards you has left our hearts. In token of our friendship we put on your neck these strings of white wampum. New moccasins are prepared for your feet. A feast awaits you ere you depart. Some of our hunters will be your escort that no passing Ojibway warriors may do you harm ere you reach the borders of your own country. Already, has Big Canoe sent runners ahead with his commands. In perfect safety you can rest and will be supplied with food along the route. Tell your people that the reason why you come back to them alive and untortured is because the Ojibways have had the Tradition of the Son of the Morning, that is also well-known among the Sioux, fulfilled. The Son of the Morning has really come. They have heard about Him and His teachings, and are trying to follow Him.

“Tell your brother Sioux that this Son of the Morning wants all of His red children of the different tribes to live in peace. Urge them to send an embassy that together we may bury the tomahawk with its edge downward and plant over it a young oak that will, as it grows stronger and heavier, ever keep it buried so that the peace may endure as long as the sun shines or the water runs.”

XXV

AN INDIAN MAIDEN'S HEART

The offenders before the council—Their humiliation—Big Canoe introduces others to the council—Shunio's noble words—Pugamagon gets Shauwandais to speak for him—Pukwaka's humiliation and confession—Omeme's loving act—The happy dénouement.

SO all absorbing was the interest in the treatment of the Sioux prisoners that nothing else was thought of until these warriors were feasted and sent off, in honour, with their escort to their own land.

The missionaries had several very interesting interviews with them before they departed, and, through Keneese, who understood their language, they endeavoured to give them some lessons from the great Book that would do them good.

The Sioux seemed much awed and even a little afraid of the Book, but their haughty natures, that they had been steeling to stand without flinching the fiery ordeal they had long expected, refused to yield. Yet it was evident that before they left they were much impressed by what they had seen and heard. With their departure, other matters that had

been allowed to fall into the background, now called for immediate attention.

A council was summoned and before it the two old men were ordered to appear.

The guilt of the one who had long been in possession of the money was not denied. He candidly admitted that he had yielded to temptation when, happening to come along the trail by the camping-place of the young men, he saw the purse and took possession of it, slipping away unnoticed and unsuspected.

Bitter and sarcastic were the speeches of many in the council, to which this man had to listen.

Pukwaka, who had had possession of the money for only a few brief minutes ere it had been wrested from him, under the searching cross-questionings, had to admit that he was quite certain that the money had not been honestly obtained. Both men were deeply depressed by the humiliating and disgraceful position in which they found themselves, but as they had the manliness to candidly express their contrition and regrets for their offences, the council, especially in view of what had lately occurred, recommended that the chief deal leniently with them.

Calling before him the two young hunters who had been so robbed of their money, Big Canoesaid, as he handed back to them the purse :

"I regret, as does the whole council, that you should have been robbed by one of our tribe. You have heard his words of regret at his covetousness. But words in such a case are not sufficient, and so I now give you these two new guns the best it has been possible to obtain.

"You," said he, turning to the thief, "are my debtor to the value of these two guns, which I have here presented to these young men, whom you so basely wronged. As you are an old man, as long as you live honestly and do right, the debt will not be collected, but if you are again brought before me, beware. What I have said remember. You can go."

Big Canoe then turned to Pukwaka, and called him to a seat on a mat near him. Then, at a significant nod from the great chief, the deerskins, which served as a door to the council lodge, were thrown aside and there entered a unique procession of young people.

As became their years in the presence of their elders, they halted at the outer circle of those who were members of the council.

When all were in their places, the chief first addressed himself to Memotas and Nabuno. In a few brief sentences he rehearsed some of the principal incidents in their young lives, and of their dangers and adventures which had drawn

them to each other. He was followed in his speech by Shunio, the father of Nabuno, who stated how proud and thankful he was to have such a brave daughter as Nabuno, and he also said that it was with equal pleasure that he had given her to Memotas, who had on more than one occasion showed by his bravery and devotion, that he was well worthy of her. When Shunio ended, Big Canoe asked :

“What price did you make Memotas pay for Nabuno?”

“Nothing,” was the prompt reply. “I refused his gifts for I felt that it would have been cruel and selfish in me to have taken anything from one who had shown such great love and courage to protect Nabuno when she was seeking for the medicine that has given me back my health, and who has since that time also shown such bravery by what he has done and suffered for her rescue.”

At these words a murmur of applause was heard amongst the young people present, but the uplifted hand of the chief speedily suppressed it.

“Will Pugamagon and Omemee come before me?” said Big Canoe.

“A little bird has told me,” said the chief, to the young man as kindly as a loving father would speak to a noble son, “that you love

this maiden. Tell us what you have done to deserve her?"

Pugamagon although brave enough in spite of his youth to meet the biggest bear in the forest with no other weapon than his keen edged knife, was shy and abashed before this large council. He, however, was able to say in a modest way that won the approval of the council,—

"It would be very much out of place for me to here talk about myself or any little thing that I have done. All I can ask, which I do as a favour of my chief, is that he will let Chauwandais speak for me."

At the request of the chief, Chauwandais, who rejoiced at the opportunity to thus speak for his brave young friend who was unknown to the greater number present, spoke and in eloquent words told all that we have learned and much more about Pugamagon. He dwelt upon his cleverness and ability especially in his action at the defile when after he had discovered the presence of the war party, he had the warriors of his village in position at the ravine, and so materially contributed to the victory over their enemy and to the rescue of Nabuno and Omemee.

So great was the impression that was produced by his earnest words that the decorum of the council was several times broken by

demonstrations of delight by the young people, and by even some much older; while the chief himself was very indulgent.

When Shauwandais had ended, Big Canoe turned towards the father of Omemee and in a voice, almost stern and cold, said:

“And what has Pukwaka to say why Omemee should not be the bride of Puga-magon who has rendered us such service, and has so well proved his love for her?”

The poor old man was completely broken up. So evident was this that when he rose and tried to speak, the anger of the people was quickly turned to pity.

“My eyes and ears,” he managed to say, “have been opened to see and understand how full of selfishness had been my heart, to which I have given way. I have disgraced myself and my people. I am unworthy of having such a daughter as Omemee. She is too good.”

He did not get any farther than this in his confession, before Omemee, caring naught for council decorum, sprang up and rushing over to him, threw her arms around his neck and burst out into tears.

The missionaries and many others could not restrain their tears even if they were of gladness for they saw in this incident the ending

of the old selfish custom, of fathers selling their daughters.

As soon as Pukwaka could control himself, he gently called Pugamagon by name to him and placing the hand of Omemee in his, he said :

“Here in the presence of my chief and council, and of these Black Coats, I give my daughter to Pugamagon. May your days of sunshine be many and those of the clouds and shadows be few.”

FINIS



